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ABSTRACT

This report explores the commitment of students and teachers to the educational enterprise in ten urban comprehensive high schools in Baltimore (Maryland), Newark (New Jersey), Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania), and Washington (District of Columbia). Data were analyzed from interviews conducted in each school with the principal, assistant principals, a counselor, teachers and department heads from a variety of departments, and a high- and low-achieving ninth or tenth grade and senior student. Additional interviews were conducted with central office staff in each city. Major variables explored include the following: (1) district characteristics; (2) school characteristics; (3) interactions among teachers and students; and (4) teacher and student commitment. Major findings include the following: (1) student and teacher commitment are closely interrelated; (2) factors which affect the commitment of both students and teachers include relevance, respect, support, expectations, and influence; and (3) each of these factors can be reflected in a series of programmatic and administrative actions at both the district and the school level. Recommendations for ways to adjust these school and district factors to build commitment are included. Illustrative material is included on nine figures. A list of references is also included. The appendices include the following: (1) a review of the related literature; (2) a list of interview questions; and (3) definitions of the variables examined. (FMW)

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BUILDING COMMITMENT AMONG STUDENTS AND TEACHERS:

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF TEN URBAN HIGH SCHOOLS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Commitment of students and teachers to the educational enterprise is a central problem in schools today, especially in urban comprehensive high schools. The pattern of behavior of students without commitment to schooling includes lateness, poor attendance, low academic performance, disorderly behavior, and a high dropout rate. A similar pattern exists among teachers. For them, low commitment is evidenced by attendance problems, lack of excitement about teaching, and a general sense of "burnout." Low commitment often leads to high turnover among younger teachers and "on-the-job retirement" among the older ones.

The problems of student and teacher commitment were surfaced in May, 1986 by the superintendents of the Baltimore, Newark, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Washington, DC school systems in a meeting with staff of Research for Better Schools, Inc. (RBS) to form the Mid-Atlantic Metropolitan Council. The Council represents a collaborative effort to promote improvement in these urban districts. The participating superintendents agreed that one of their top priorities was to improve their comprehensive high schools, a concern shared by colleagues in big cities around the country.

As a first step in addressing this priority, RBS initiated an exploratory study of the commitment of both students and teachers. The study was intended to contribute to an understanding of teachers' and students' commitments and the factors that district and school administrators can use to build those commitments, as well as to derive recommendations to improve the quality of secondary education.

Study Methods

Each superintendent provided access to two inner city comprehensive high schools as participants in this study. In each school, interviews were conducted with the principal, assistant principals, a counselor, teachers and department heads from a variety of departments, and high and low achieving ninth or tenth grade and senior students. Additional interviews were conducted with central office staff in each city.

A preliminary framework was developed to identify the major variables to be explored in the study including district characteristics, school characteristics, interactions among teachers and students, and teacher and student commitment. Open-ended questions were developed and pretested to address the categories in the framework. The specific questions varied with the respondent's role, e.g., the superintendent was asked about district factors and students were asked questions to elicit their levels of commitment.

Data analysis used the following steps.

1. Following a pilot test of the preliminary framework in the field, some of the concepts and the defininitions of the dimensions on which schools could be compared were slightly revised.

2. Site visitors used the revised framework and definitions to rate each school on all dimensions.

3. Ratings were checked against field notes to verify their reliability and accuracy.

4. Statistical associations were computed to examine relationships among related variables suggested by the conceptual framework and field work.

5. Field notes were reviewed to find examples of the processes affecting commitment in each school. These reviews also helped identify practices which promote commitment.

6. Return visits provided feedback to administrators at each site, validated conclusions about specific schools and districts, and obtained additional information for the final report.

The Findings

The study addressed four research questions which provide a framework for organizing the conclusions.

1. What is the nature of student and teacher commitment in high schools?

It is not enough to talk about teacher or student commitments in the abstract because individuals make many kinds of commitment. Teachers develop three distinct kinds of commitment in these schools: commitment to place, commitment to students, and commitment to teaching as an activity. Commitment to place implies considerable loyalty to the school, but it does not have implications for how the teaching role is carried out. Commitment to students leads to strong emotional bonds, often a personal caring for students. When many teachers share such a commitment, the result can be a climate where students feel comfortable and wanted, but there is not necessarily a press for high achievement. Commitment to teaching leads to strong concern with the craft aspects of one's work and an interest in high student achievement. However, without commitment to students, commitment to teaching can lead to an affectively "cold" climate that is not motivating for students.

Students develop a similar commitment to place. In addition, they develop a commitment to learning which leads them to take the school's instructional work seriously. Commitment to place without this commitment to learning will bring students into the school but will not contribute to higher levels of achievement. In order to build both kinds of student commitment, all three kinds of teacher commitment are necessary. Without commitment to place, to students, and to teaching, the school environment will lack elements that contribute to student success. Of the three, commitment to teaching appears hardest to develop.

2. What is the relationship between student and teacher commitment in high schools?

A mutually reinforcing relationship between the commitments of teachers and students was identified. In some schools this relationship can lead to a vicious cycle where the lack of commitment of one group affects the other. Where teacher commitment is low, teachers blame others, including both students and administrators. They complain that students' family backgrounds, attitudes, and skills keep them from achieving. Often these problems are real, but no more so than in other schools where teachers do not complain as much. The function of such complaints is to allow teachers to shift responsiblity for poor academic performance to others and to help them maintain their self-esteem. However, such blaming is often associated with behaviors that reduce student commitment. Where student commitment is low, student behavior detracts from instruction. Students are passive in class and do not work. In addition, many are disruptive in the halls and classrooms. This behavior reduces teacher commitment.

Due to this mutually reinforcing relationship, efforts to build the commitment of either group would be well advised to attend to both. Drop-out prevention programs that do not address the attitudes of teachers may ignore a major factor that pushes students out of school. Similarly, teacher burnout programs that do not attend to the attitudes of students fail to address the actions of people with whom teachers spend the most time.

3. What school factors influence the commitments of students and teachers?

Five factors affect student and teacher commitment.

a. *Relevance* refers to the process of giving meaning to school activities, especially for students. Often students see no connection between what they are expected to do in school and the rest of their lives. The most effective way to convince them of the relevance of an activity is to show how it will help them to get jobs after school. However, many students are woefully ignorant of what it takes to get the jobs they want. Two practices contribute considerably to students' sense of program relevance. The first is career-oriented programs in the schools; several of these schools appear to have some very imaginative programs. The second is the quality of counseling. In most of the schools visited, counselors simply lacked the time to help students choose careers and relevant courses because of competing commitments.

b. *Respect* has to do with whether students and teachers believe they are being treated with decency and fairness by those at higher levels. Students are very sensitive to the way they are treated by adults in a school. When they are not given the opportunity to ask questions about classwork or feel that disciplinary matters are handled arbitrarily, they rebel. Teachers have much the same reaction to the way they are treated by school and district administrators. Finally, teachers often lack the opportunity to interact with and draw support from their peers in the school.

c. Support comes partly through the manipulation of the physical environment. The provision of decent buildings and adequate instructional materials is important to students and teachers. Support also comes through administrative actions: both providing a sense of consistency--that rules and procedures will be administered predictably--and through more personalized support that provides the individual with special assistance in achieving a worthwhile goal. Administrative actions have a greater impact than physical support in this study.

d. Appropriate expectations refers to the extent to which administrators make instruction and achievement a priority for both students and teachers. This can be done by providing special academic incentives for students and similar incentives and a strong inservice program for teachers. Several schools in the study reflect environments where teachers can teach but few manifest situations where teachers want to teach. Appropriate expectations are one of the most powerful factors affecting student commitment.

e. Influence refers to the extent to which teachers have the opportunity to shape decisions. Teachers do not appear interested in major district-wide policy decisions. They do want to have input into the decisions that affect their working conditions, what they teach, and how they teach. Influence is one of the most important factors affecting teacher commitment.

These factors highlight two different approaches to improving schools. The first, as exemplified by appropriate expectations, builds quality by stressing external standards and pressures for improvement. The second, as reflected in the factors of relevance, respect, support, and shared influence, relies on intrinsic rewards and building up the individual to make schools better. Strategies for effective school improvement should stress both approaches. No choice between them will be as successful as a good combination.

4. What district factors affect the school factors which, in turn, influence the commitments of teachers and students?

The district factors are similar to those at the school level.

a. The central office can play an important role in setting appropriate expectations through integrating programs into formalized, district-wide curricula that are coordinated with district-wide criterion-referenced testing programs. These are quite effective when they are well-designed and have the support of staff. State minimum competency testing is not a substitute for, and may interfere with such programs.

b. The district can provide support, especially to teachers, through a coordinated staff development program, material support, and moral support which helps build self-esteem. Support for students could be in the form of a clean building, an orderly and safe environment, and sufficient instructional supplies.

c. The district can share influence with staff by finding ways to permit voluntary transfers among buildings, by allowing principals more say in which teachers will work in their schools, and by ensuring that teachers have input into the development of the curriculum and testing programs described above and understand that they have had such influence.

d. Relevance can be achieved by ensuring that teachers share the vision of district leaders, so improvement initiatives become more than new requirements with which teachers must cope.

e. The district can also improve system design by (1) reducing the staff-line conflicts that sometimes develop between central office supervisors and principals, (2) by protecting counselors' and department heads' time to ensure they can carry out their counseling and school improvement leadership duties, and (3) by attending to the mix of comprehensive and other schools in the district to ensure that the comprehensive schools receive and recognize they receive an equitable share of resources.

The Recommendations

Student and teacher commitment are closely interrelated and interdependent. Factors which affect commitment of both groups include relevance, respect, support, expectations, and influence. Each of these factors can be reflected in a series of programmatic and administrative actions at the school and district level. The sum of such actions should be a comprehensive and coordinated district-specific program designed to foster and enhance commitment of teachers and students.

Recommendations of ways to adjust these school and district factors to build commitment follow.

1. The success of career-oriented programs serving a limited number of students highlights the need to expand such offerings so the larger school population can be served. Such expansion should include engaging "career specialists" to work with the district's high schools. In addition, the schedules of school counselors should provide enough time for them to work directly with students on those concerns which affect commitment (e.g., career counseling, college advisement).

2. Promoting respect in a school should involve such measures as extracting from the school history those positive elements that can be shared as a matter of pride, involving students and faculty in operational

decisions, providing opportunities for collegial interaction, and initiating staff development activities that deal with the attitudinal and perceptual realms as well as with cognitive areas.

3. The level of support for staff can be enhanced through administrative actions at the superintendent's level. More involvement of the principals in staff assignment policies should be encouraged and facilitated. Teachers might be provided with opportunities to participate in reviews, analyses, and revisions of the district transfer policy. Levels of support for students can be increased through establishing a collaborative effort of students and teachers around building issues such as cleanliness, safety, and orderliness.

4. Instructional press can be heightened through the establishment of programs which highlight academic achievement and which reflect high expectations. Examples of such projects could include increasing incentives for high academic performance, concentrating staff development efforts on the improvement of instruction, providing opportunities for staff and students to come together around curricular issues, and a yearly staff retreat built around instructional themes.

5. Teachers' commitment is shaped by their influence on school-based decisions which they perceive as directly affecting them. Proposed actions which reflect this finding include delegating selected operational decisions to the department level, including teachers in the planning of staff development days, establishing a district Teachers' Advisory Council, and developing networks of high schools around common problem areas.

This report was initiated as an outgrowth of the concerns of the superintendents of five large urban school systems. Based upon site visits to ten high schools and utilizing current research findings, it reflects observations and insights on the nature of commitment. It also suggests approaches that district and school leaders in these five districts (and possibly other districts) can use to build the commitment of staff and students. The recommendations presented can then be used as one basis for establishing priorities and fashioning specific district programs or courses of action.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.. i

I. INTRODUCTION.. 1
   - Study Design.. 3
   - Data Collection... 4
   - Data Analysis... 7
   - The Outline of the Report... 10

II. THE NATURE OF COMMITMENT: DIMENSIONS AND INTERACTION............. 11
   - The Dimensions of Commitment....................................... 12
   - The Interaction of Teacher and Student Commitment.................. 19
   - Conclusion.. 25

III. SCHOOL FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENT AND TEACHER COMMITMENT.......... 27
   - Relevance... 28
   - Respect... 32
   - Support... 35
   - Expectations.. 38
   - Influence... 40
   - A Holistic View of the Findings.................................... 42
   - Implication: Need for a Dual Strategy.............................. 44

IV. DISTRICT OPERATIONS AND COMMITMENT................................ 47
   - Expectations.. 48
   - Support... 50
   - Influence... 53
   - Relevance... 57
   - System Design... 59
   - Summary... 62

V. RECOMMENDATIONS... 65
   - Relevance... 66
   - Respect... 71
   - Support... 74
   - Expectations.. 78
   - Influence... 83
   - Conclusion.. 87

APPENDIX A. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE............................. 89

Appendix B. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS...................................... 105

APPENDIX C. VARIABLE DEFINITIONS..................................... 111

REFERENCES.. 121

I. INTRODUCTION

Urban comprehensive high schools face a series of related problems including poor attendance, high dropout rates, low achievement, poor relationships among different ethnic groups, and a high frequency of violence and vandalism. What links these problems is a strong sense of alienation among students exhibiting them and a need to overcome that alienation by building some level of commitment to school among students (Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack, & Rock, 1986). Yet, policy makers typically focus on each of the problems in a piecemeal fashion without addressing this underlying issue of student alienation (Newman, 1981). In fact, policies such as tightened graduation standards risk increasing student alienation and contributing to dropout rates (Hamilton, 1986; McDill, Natriello, & Pallas, 1985).

Similar problems occur among teachers. In an earlier era, when the teaching force was younger, high turnover was endemic in urban high schools (Becker, 1952; Bruno & Doscher, 1981). The current group of older teachers often feels trapped in positions it does not want and experiences a strong sense of burnout. Informally, school administrators refer to this syndrome as on-the-job retirement. It affects teachers' preparation for lessons, relationships with students, and absenteeism (Dworkin, 1986; Farber, 1984). Until some attention is given to building teacher commitment, these specific problems will continue to occur.

In the spring of 1986, the superintendents of the Baltimore, Newark, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Washington, DC, school systems came together with staff of Research for Better Schools to consider a wide range of shared educational problems. Individually, they mentioned concerns ranging from low achievement to an increase in inter-racial tensions. While these problems occurred at all levels, they chose to focus initially on high schools. Rather than looking at each problem separately, the superintendents agreed that Research for Better Schools should undertake a study to discover ways of building commitment among both students and staff. Two comprehensive high schools in each of the five districts participated in the exploration.

The study was intended to achieve two purposes. The more important was to identify means that district and school leaders in the five cities could use to build the commitment of staff and students. As part of this purpose, the study was intended to lead to specific programmatic activities that the five participating school districts could undertake as a collectivity, of all, or at least a majority, of its members.

A second purpose was to provide descriptive feedback on conditions in the schools and districts that the superintendents and principals could use for their own planning activities. This purpose has been addressed through a number of face-to-face interactions between the researchers and each superintendent, to share insights about that particular district; feedback sessions with each principal, to share information about that particular school; and a one-day workshop with all of the principals, to share more general findings and impressions.

This report addresses the first purpose by providing findings about the nature of student and teacher commitment and by suggesting recommendations for future activities. The remainder of this chapter briefly presents a study design for the effort, describes the methods employed, and offers an overview of other study activities.

Study Design

While there is a considerable body of research that examines the commitment of students and teachers separately, few studies have examined the interplay of the two. Moreover, relatively few have attempted to develop recommendations for the leaders of large urban districts. For that reason, it was deemed important to draw upon existing research and to employ an exploratory study design that would facilitate the generation of new concepts and recommendations that would be of high utility for the superintendents of the five districts (some of that research as it applies to the framework that developed out of the study is reviewed in Appendix A).

The study began with a broad conceptual framework which is illustrated in Figure 1. This figure illustrates the four major categories of variables of interest (district factors, school factors, teacher commitment, student commitment) and the relationships among them that were assumed at the inception of the study. The study was intended to clarify the sub-categories within these larger groupings and explicate the relationships among them.

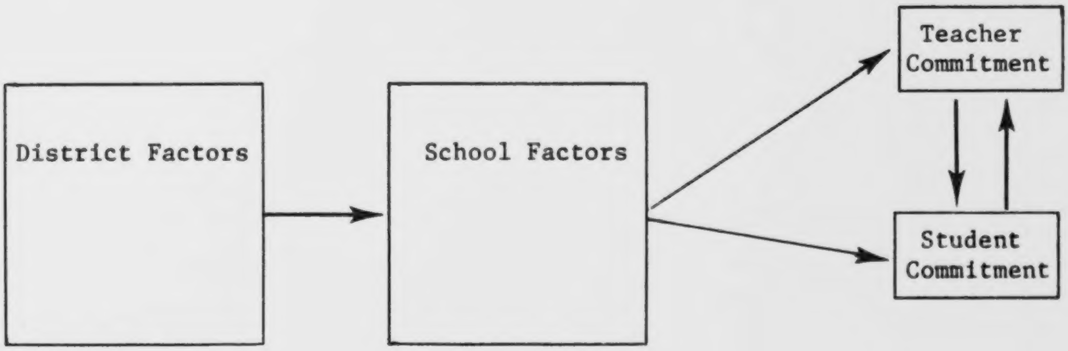
Four research questions were derived from this framework.

1. What is the nature of student and teacher commitment in high schools?
2. What is the relationship between student and teacher commitment in high schools?
3. What school factors influence the commitments of students and teachers?
4. What district factors affect the school factors which, in turn, influence the commitments of teachers and students?

To ensure that the study findings would have maximum relevance for the five participating districts, a fifth question was added:

5. What recommendations for practice are implied by the answers to the first four questions?

Figure 1
Categories of Variables Influencing
Teacher and Student Commitment



The remainder of this chapter describes how these questions were addressed by describing data collection procedures and then those used for data analysis.

Data Collection

Data were to be collected in the district office and in two comprehensive high schools in each city. The superintendent was asked to pick two urban comprehensive high schools with similar student bodies, one of which appeared to be coping more effectively with the attendant problems of an innter city high school.

Tab 1 presents some descriptive statistics on the 10 high schools in the study. They are generally middle-sized with a poor, minority population. The median school size is 1,553, with three smaller schools having less than 1,100 students and two very large ones with over 2,500. Five of the faculties include 90 or more teachers. In seven schools, three-fourths or more of the students are black, and in eight, two-fifths or more receive a free lunch. Where data are available, average daily attendance is low, ranging from 72 to 85 percent.

Three-day site visits were made to each district. Two people spent one day in each district office interviewing the following individuals: the superintendent, the deputy superintendent, and individuals responsible for curriculum, research and evaluation, staff development, and teacher and student personnel. Approximately twenty-five district-level interviews were conducted. Three person-days were spent in each building. Individual interviews were conducted with the principal, assistant principals, and a counselor. In addition, interviews were conducted out with three to four members of each of the following groups: teachers (in English, mathematics, social studies, science, and vocational education), department heads, and ninth or tenth grade and senior students who were either high or low achieving academically. In all, 270 individuals were interviewed in the 10 schools.

The school administration scheduled interviews before the research team's arrival. Interviews lasted about one class period (40 to 44 minutes). Those with administrators were held in their offices. Others were held in private spaces provided by the school (usually in the library or a free classroom). Interviews were open-ended but designed to obtain

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics on the Ten High Schools in the Study

	Baltimore		Newark		Philadelphia		Pittsburgh		Washington	
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Total Enrollment	1,589	1,616	1,533	1,071	3,613	2,677	1,062	1,061	1,327	1,573
Total Full-Time Teachers	83	79	108	83	181	171	140(a)	70	82	91
Other Full-Time Professionals	9	9	14	13	14	11	15	38	9	14
Race of Students (%)(b)										
Black	99	38	99	96	89	58	66	99	96	100
White	1	59	0	0	10	29	29	1	2	0
Other	1	3	1	4	0	13	4	1	2	0
Students Receiving Free Lunch (%)	60	45	42	48	50	5(c)	28	43	62	35
Average Daily Attendance (%)	73	75			76	73	85	72		

(a) School also serves as a district teacher training center and employs additional staff.

(b) Some percentages do not equal 100 percent due to rounding or elimination of a category not found in all schools.

(c) Only AFDC data were available. Other data at RBS indicate that school AFDC figures are an average 12 percent lower than free luch figures so a correction was made using that percentage.

information on major categories in the study design: district factors, school factors, and teacher and student commitment (copies of the interview guides are provided in Appendix B). The specific questions varied with the respondents' position, e.g., the superintendent was asked about district factors and students were asked about their levels of commitment. Interviewers were given leeway to adjust the questions to local conditions and to the pace of the group. The complete set of questions was not asked of each individual, but all major categories were covered in each school and district.

After the site visits were completed and analysis was initiated, a return visit was made to each district. Separate meetings were held with the superintendent and with the principal of each school. An important purpose of these meetings was to feed back first impressions of each district and school and to give administrators an opportunity to provide information that might correct erroneous impressions. Initially, two principals questioned the research team's ability to understand their complex organizations after only a single day on site, but both ended their interviews by commenting that their school had been described well.

Data Analysis

Data analysis proceeded at two levels: school and district. The first three questions were addressed at the school level. For instance, the first research question concentrated on the general character of both student and teacher commitment in the 10 high schools included in the study. While not insensitive to variation in commitment among individuals and groups, the focus of attention was on the overall nature of commitment in each place. Similarly, in addressing questions two and three, attention was on school-to-school variation. The fourth question, however, raises the level of analysis to the district to ask what characteristics of the whole system affect what takes place in each school. These levels of analysis were chosen partly in light of the intended audience of this report, district and school administrators, who were presumed to be primarily concerned with creating district and school conditions that would promote higher levels of commitment.

At the school level, data analysis relied heavily on the quantification of qualitative data (Talmadge & Rasher, 1981). This approach is often used in educational research (e.g., Crain, 1968) and is especially useful for synthesizing diverse data about a complex social entity like a school, a district, or a city. This approach was supplemented with a more conventional qualitative analysis that seeks examples from field notes of events or quotes that illustrate, support, or contradict the concepts that are being generated and relationships among them that are envisioned.

To conduct this analysis, the following steps were taken. First, after data collection was completed, the researchers made a preliminary assessment of what had been learned, what subcategories should be developed within each of the four major categories, and what specific variables should be developed within each of the subcategories. This assessment was tested with all six site visitors.

Second, each school was rated on the variables by the two or three individuals who had visited that school. A seven-point scale was used: high, high minus, medium plus, medium, medium minus, low plus, and low. The ratings were then discussed by the entire group of site visitors. Variable definitions were also reviewed.

Third, after this group session, each site visitor was given a list of variable definitions that had been sharpened through the group discussion (Appendix C presents those definitions and examples from data indicating high or low ratings). The visitor was asked to review field notes from each site visited to check the accuracy of the group ratings in light of the definitions. In each case, the visitor had to provide observations or illustrative quotes to justify the ratings. Some ratings were changed as a result of this review.

Fourth, the ratings from the individuals who visited a particular school were compared. Differences of one point were simply averaged. Differences of two or more points were reconciled in discussions among the disagreeing site visitors. When this process was completed, it was determined that raters had agreed on 40 percent of the ratings; they had differed by one point on 32 percent of the ratings and by more than one point on nine percent of the ratings. Nineteen percent of the time only one person did the rating because that individual was the only one who had collected information relevant to the variable.

Using the original study design and insights from the field work for guidance, associations among variables were then examined. In most cases this was done using Kendall's tau, a nonparametric statistic similar to Spearman's rank-order correlation but more accurate in case of ties (Blalock, 1972). In some cases, relationships also were graphed pictorially as scattergrams. These statistical comparisons should be viewed as suggestive but not definitive. The research team placed more credence in quantitative comparisons where there was qualitative support for them. In particular, the team looked for evidence why there should be a relationship between variables and the underlying mechanisms at work.

The district-level analysis was much less formal. The visitors in each district received a number of strong impressions about programs, operating styles, and external factors when visiting each district. These impressions were recorded in site summaries after each visit and later checked against detailed field notes. The site summaries and detailed notes provided the basis for a series of analytic memoranda written on different topics related to district organization, typically using data from a number of districts at this point. These memoranda provided the basis of the district-level report.

Outline of the Report

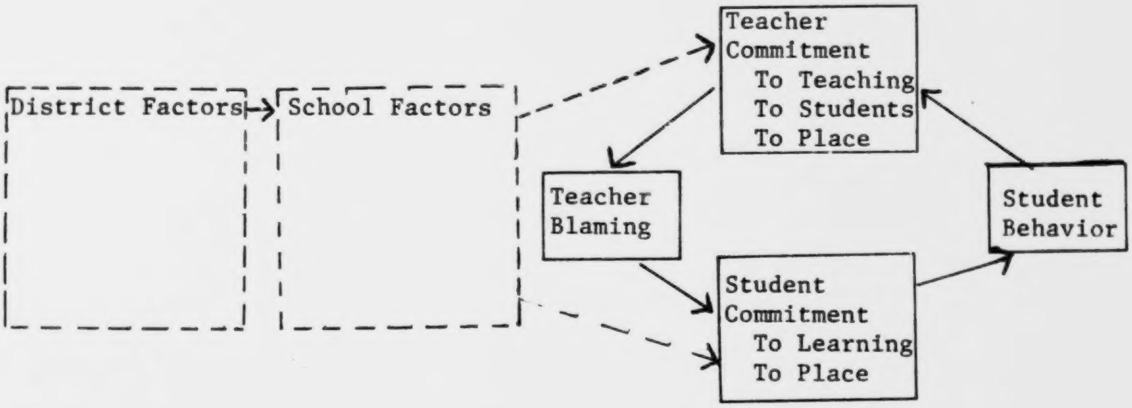
This chapter has introduced the study by presenting a study design and describing the study context and methods. The remaining chapters address the research questions raised by the study design. The next chapter addresses questions about the nature of commitment and the relationship between teacher and student commitment. Chapter Three speaks to the question of school-based factors associated with student and teacher commitment. Chapter Four turns to district-level events and phenomena in order to clarify how larger policy decisions and formal systems influence commitment at the grass-roots level. Finally, Chapter Five reviews all the data previously generated in order to make recommendations about how school and district leaders can initiate and support activities which build student and teacher commitment.

II. THE NATURE OF COMMITMENT: DIMENSIONS AND INTERACTION

This chapter clarifies the nature of student and teacher commitment in the sample of ten urban high schools. To do so, it addresses the first two research questions introduced above, namely, what is the nature of student and teacher commitment in high schools and what is the relationship between student and teacher commitment in high schools? To address the first question, field data are reviewed to identify five separate dimensions of commitment: three for teachers and two for students. To address the second question, the relationships among teacher and student commitment variables are examined and three variables that mediate between student and teacher commitment are introduced. Figure 2 illustrates how the original guiding framework for this research is elaborated through answering these questions.

The practical significance of this analysis is twofold. First, school leaders must recognize that commitment is a multidimensional concept and that it is important to build a range of commitments among students and staff. Second, vicious cycles can develop in which low teacher commitment reduces that of students and vice versa.

Figure 2
First Elaboration of the Conceptual Model


District Factors
School Factors
Teacher Commitment
To Teaching
To Students
To Place
Teacher Blaming
Student Behavior
Student Commitment
To Learning
To Place

The Dimensions of Commitment

There is a tendency in the literature to write about worker commitment without clarifying "commitment to what" (Salancik, 1977), but the literature on school culture clarifies how the object of commitments can vary in important ways (Rossman et al., forthcoming). An indirect strategy was used to identify the objects of commitment. Both students and teachers were asked broad questions like "What makes for a good day?" and "Why do (students/-teachers) want to stay here?" In addressing these questions, three types of teacher commitment and two types of student commitment were identified.

Teacher Commitment

Teachers' commitment varies along three dimensions. One of them is their commitment to students. Teachers make comments like:

> I stay because of these students. I've come across students fighting after school hours. They don't address me, but I get respect.
>
> I stay because of the feedback I get from the students I helped. I like to help students. There are times I touch somebody.
>
> I'm helping students. Just the one or two who say they wish I were teaching geometry.

These people get a personal response from their students that makes them feel that the work they do is worthwhile. This is particularly important because the people that teachers interact with most often at work are students. But there are teachers who find their interactions with students alienating:

> You work harder here because of the clientele. After eighteen years, I've put my time in.
>
> They are not learning. School does them no good. They have their problems. The slow students are barely literate... You get no sense of satisfaction here.

Another dimension is commitment to teaching, which is different from commitment to students. The emphasis of commitment to teaching is on receiving fulfillment from exercising craft skill. Sometimes this comes from the reaction one sees to a lesson and sometimes it comes more from the respect of other teachers:

> The degree of professionalism here is exceptional. At the school I worked at before, the main topic of discussion was retirement. Here, people talk about educational issues; what works. It's intellectually stimulating.
>
> There is more unity in the departments. In the work room, people share materials and discuss motivation. That didn't happen in other buildings I worked in.
>
> [A good day is] when the students learn. There's a good discussion, a challenging discussion. When you test and everyone does well.

Finally, teachers can become committed to the specific place. Due to working conditions, social bonds, or just the passage of time, the individual develops a special loyalty to the given school:

> I was a temp here for my first two years. I was offered a permanent slot at [another school], but I stayed here as a temp instead. . .I'm ready to try something different, but I want to do it here. I'd like to get into counseling.
>
> I stay here from habit. I'm comfortable here. I know the people. I've found my niche. Its clear what's expected of you. You know how far you can go.

Teachers also become alienated from or lose commitment to specific places. Some try to overcome this orientation by convincing themselves that their school is not all that different from others in the city:

> I don't believe the problems are that different in any urban school.
>
> Going someplace else doesn't make the grass greener. There are problems everywhere.

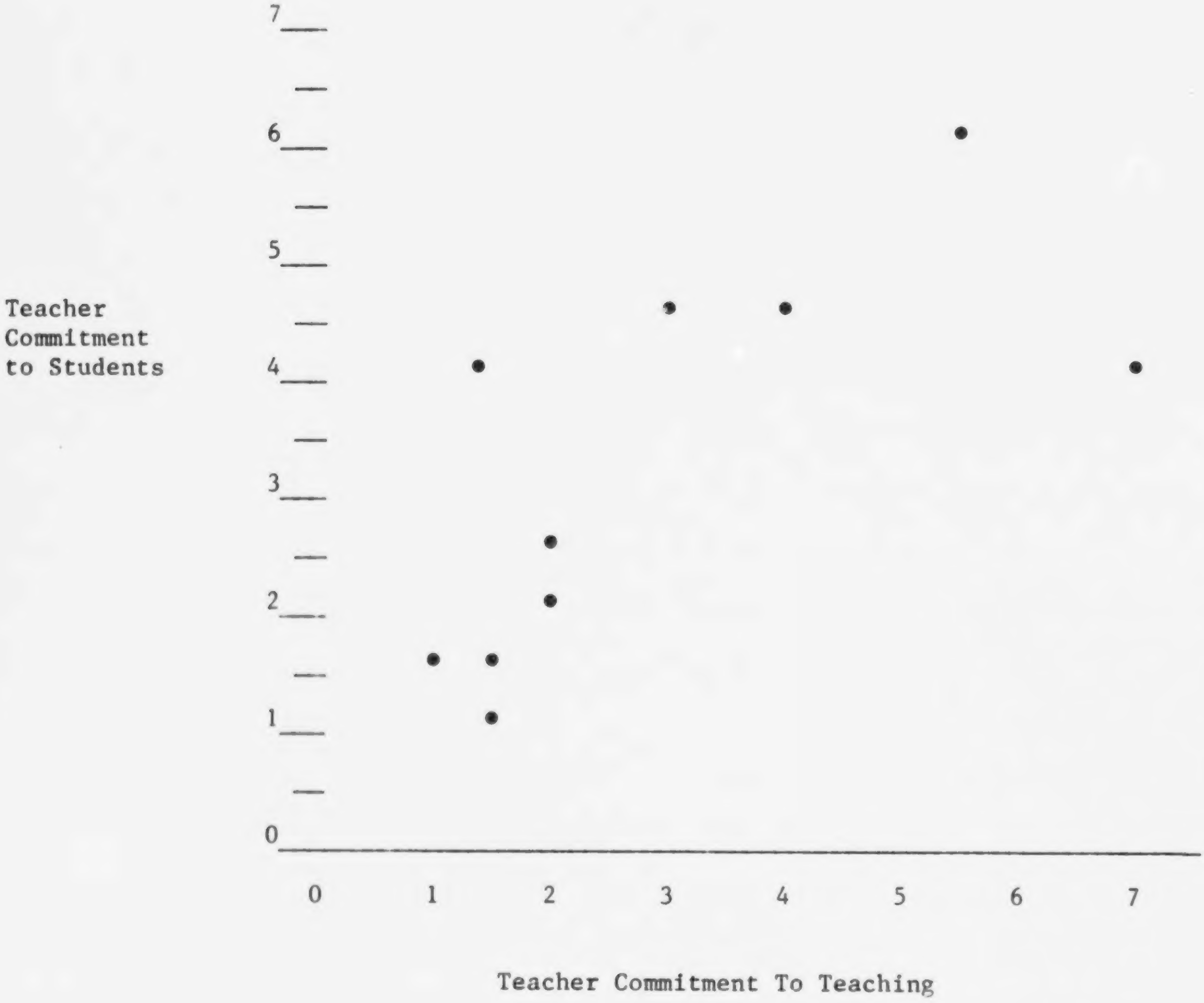
Others admit their discontent and explain it by reference to salaries or other phenomena that keep them from changing jobs.

These three different kinds of commitment provide an affective basis for different kinds of behavior. Commitment to place implies considerable loyalty to the school. Its manifestations include continued tenure and willingness to take on a variety of roles, but does not necessarily have implications for the conduct of the teaching role. Commitment to students leads to strong emotional bonds with students, often a personal caring for them. When many teachers share this commitment, the result can be a positive climate where students feel comfortable and wanted, but there is not necessarily a press for high achievement. Commitment to teaching leads to strong concern with the craft aspects of one's work and also to an interest in student achievement; the reward for commitment to teaching is student learning. It also implies high standards and expectations for student achievement that are not part of the more unconditionally accepting commitment to students. However, commitment to teaching without a related interest in students as individuals can lead to an affectively "cold" climate that is not motivating for students.

To assess the levels of each kind of commitment and the extent to which they appear together, the site visitors rated each school on each dimension of commitment separately. While they were generally close, commitment to teaching was the lowest with an average rating of 2.9, while commitment to place and to students were somewhat higher--3.1 and 3.15, respectively. This suggests that it may be especially difficult to get teachers excited about the task of improving their craft.

The different kinds of commitment are highly associated, but there are important differences. Figure 3 presents a scattergram showing the ratings of all ten schools on teacher commitment to teaching and to students.

Figure 3
Scattergram of Teacher Commitment to Students By Teacher Commitment To Teaching



Kendall's tau = .63

The Kendall's tau of .63 shows the generally strong association between the two variables. But commitment to students has less variation with four schools having moderate commitment to students of either 4.0 or 4.5. The range of commitment to teaching among these schools goes from 2.0 to 7.0, almost the full range possible. The two schools in the upper right corner are among the highest on both variables. Yet, one school is distinctly higher on commitment to teaching. This school has a special teacher training program that serves all schools in that district, and regular teachers in it also act as trainers. The other school is higher on commitment to students. The school has a distinctive culture and tradition of respect for others that is demonstrated by slogans, actions, and dress that are enforced by administrators, teachers, and older students. The associations of these two variables with commitment to place are also strong: .64 for place and teaching and .73 for place and students.

Student Commitment

Circumstances and conditions in urban school environments influence students' commitments to school and to learning. Only the youngest high school students are required by state attendance laws to attend school. The older ones may legally leave, but their options are limited. Unemployment rates for black youth are extremely high. Jobs are rarely available in inner city areas, and racial prejudice and age discrimination limit the positions for which black youth will be hired (Fine, 1986). As a result, students are not likely to leave school for work, but they may question whether high school graduation will yield them a job. In the meantime, the options open to them appear to be the schools or the streets.

How students feel about the schooling option is manifest in their commitment to learning and their commitment to place. Some students are committed to learning. They indicate that they take seriously the school's primary activity:

> I have a good day when I get the answer to a hard question in class.
>
> In [a special program], you can work independently and help plan your courses. You can suggest projects and topics to work on what interests you.
>
> A good day is when you understand the classwork and you know something new at the end of the day.

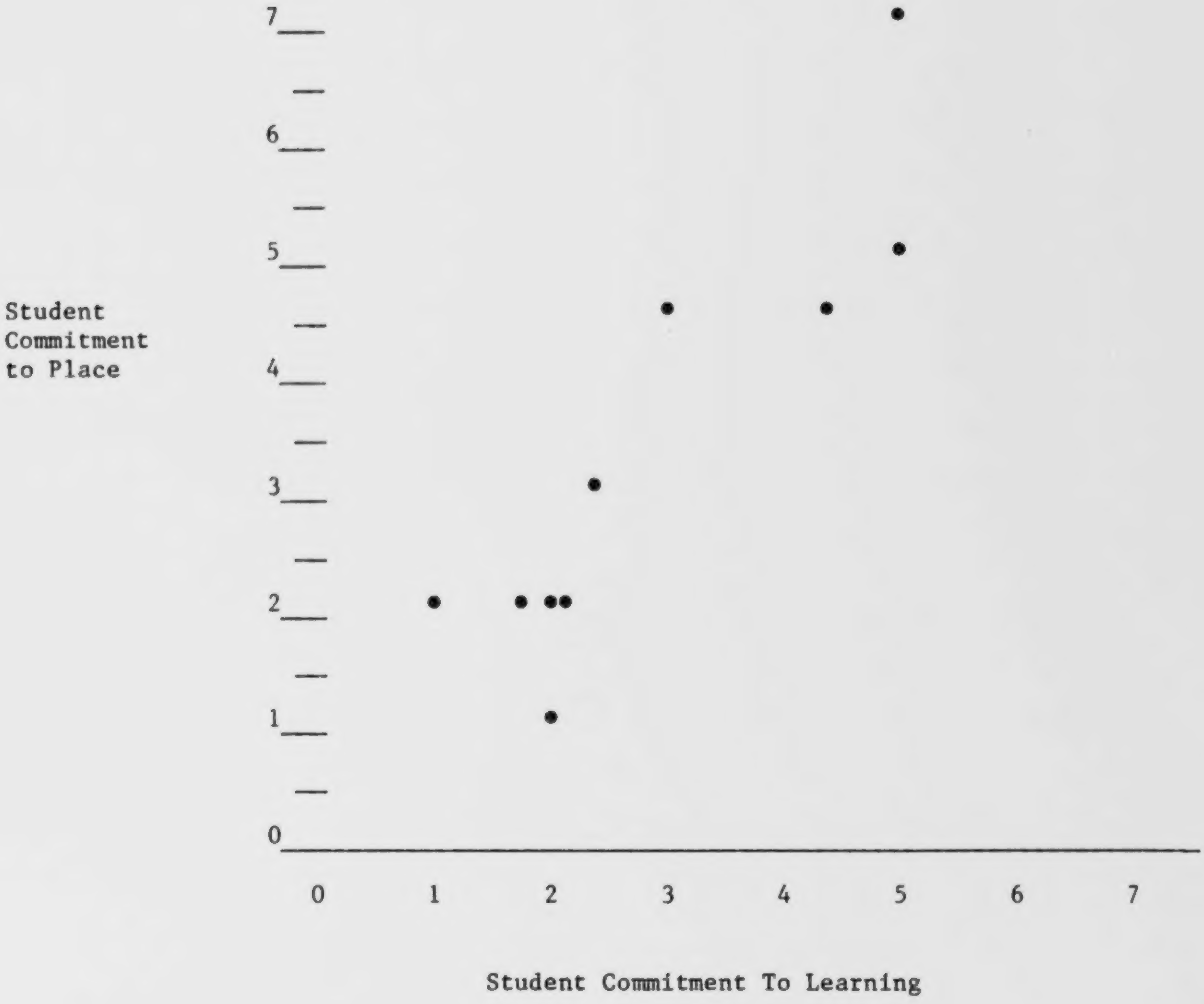
Others who are alienated from learning find the instructional activity something to be tolerated or opposed:

> I tolerate teachers. I use "passive resistance" and sleep through class.
>
> I'm not gonna use science or history or world cultures. They should be electives.
>
> A good day is when it goes fast and I get out of here.

Students also become committed to the "place." They did not talk a great deal about this kind of commitment. It appears that school is important because it is where students can come to be with their friends, or where they find activities other than educational ones to keep them occupied. These include extracurricular activities but also "hanging around" with others.

The ten schools were rated on the levels of student commitment to place and to learning. Figure 4 shows that these two kinds of commitment are also quite closely associated. Still, there are some discrepancies in these ratings. Two schools, for instance, have identical commitment to place (4.5), but the difference between the two of them in commitment to learning is almost two points. Thus, getting students to school and involving them in the learning process are related, but not identical enterprises.

Figure 4
Scattergram Of Students Commitment To Place By Students Commitment To Learning



Kendall's tau = .79

The Interaction of Teacher and Student Commitment

Not only are the different commitments of teachers and students associated; the commitments of each are also related to those of the other. Due to the constant contact between teachers and students, each group forms strong impressions of the other.

Students have very clear ideas about the teachers they would like to work with. When asked what made a good or a bad teacher, they often give complex, multipart responses:

> A good teacher is fun, caring, devoted, patient, intelligent, a role model, expressive, personal.
>
> Bad teachers are lazy, unorganized, disrespectful, prejudice (sic), and impatient.

Examination of these responses suggests that there are two major underlying themes. First, preferred teachers exhibit a certain level of respect for students. They do not have what students call "an attitude." This respect is apparent in what teachers say to students and how they act towards students.

> Some teachers talk down to you like you're stupid when you ask questions.
>
> Some teachers embarrass you in front of the class. They make jokes about failed tests, poor grades, and things.
>
> Teachers take stuff from kids like radios and don't give them back. That's stealing!

The second theme focuses on instruction. Students do not necessarily expect sophisticated teaching techniques. Their most frequent appeal is that the teacher make the work interesting. Even more important than that, however, is having the patience to explain when students do not understand something the first time. Explaining and re-explaining is the dominant theme in students' comments on teachers:

> Good teachers don't get mad when you ask them to repeat a question.

> Good teachers talk to the class and explain things. They are interested and concerned.
>
> A bad teacher just throws things on the board. The teacher just tells you to do the work like you already know it.
>
> A bad teacher is one that does not care, one that tosses the work on the board and don't explain it. One that doesn't involve himself or his work into his students.

Similarly, teachers' commitment to their work comes to a great extent from the response they get from students. This is a major theme in their explanations for what makes for a good or a bad day.

> [A bad day is] when you think you're cooking and they say, "Can I go to the bathroom?" When you look into their eyes and you can see clear out of the backs of their heads. I teach the slows. I've had some awesome days.
>
> Better days come when the students try to experiment with problems and take it a little bit farther. Especially in the special programs. In the academy. Some of those kids are turned on. They see concepts come alive.
>
> A bad day is when you have to break up a fight. When you have tough students to deal with. If I have to argue with a student, I can't let it go.

Since a major reinforcer for teachers is how students respond to lessons, they get the greatest rewards from working with students who are more responsive and achieve at higher levels. From an equity perspective, one would prefer teachers working with low achieving students to exhibit greater levels of creativity and effort, but it appears that these teachers often withdraw and do less. The teacher who talked about teaching "the slows" went on to say that "I'm just a slow gal." Later, she said, "This year I have one magnet class. Its like being on sabbatical."

Table 2 illustrates the strong association between student and teacher commitment. Associations with student commitment to place run from .58 for teacher commitment to teaching to .92 for teacher commitment to place, with the highest association being between teachers' and students' commitment to place. Associations between student commitment to learning and all three teacher commitments are in the high .70s.

Table 2

Kendall's Taus Between
Teacher and Student Commitment
(n = 10 schools)

Student Commitment to	Teacher Commitment to		
	Teaching	Students	Place
Place	.58	.63	.92
Learning	.78	.77	.79

Another element in the teachers' response to students is a kind of externalization of responsibility. To preserve their professional self-respect, some teachers blame students' low achievement on their family backgrounds or on lack of adequate building and district support (Metz, 1986). By shifting responsibility to others, whether students or administrators, teachers can then justify their continuation in the patterns of behavior they have used in the past, even when those behaviors are dysfunctional for the current situation.

This phenomenon appeared in some of the schools in the study. Teachers spent a great deal of time complaining about the family background of students and their lack of ability or interest in school work. These were the teachers who complained most about "creaming," the siphoning off of high achieving students to other schools or special programs. In fact, most students did come from the kind of impoverished backgrounds that is associated with low achievement. This was also true of the students in other schools in the study, however. What distinguishes among the schools in the study, then, was not the students' difficult situations, but the amount of attention teachers gave to those situations and the extent of their willingness to take responsibility for the achievement of students with this background.

> This school used to be a real comprehensive school. There was a bell-shaped curve of ability. Now we lose students to [Schools A and B] and the magnets. The ____ program pulls better kids out of this building. We are left with what's left. In effect, we're a magnet for special ed.
>
> They don't care. More black students drop out. They have no family, no foundation. They can go out on the corner and pop a pill....The white students act the same way. They have no incentives. I called one mother about her child not coming to school. She said, he doesn't like school.
>
> At first, the black kids didn't want to be here [after attendance lines were redrawn]. Now they mask it and drop out....The problems include anger, hostility, lower reading scores. The dropout rate is up. It's a spinoff of the civil disobedience of the 60s. People broke the law and got away with it.
>
> The white kids don't want to go to school. They say, "My Dad's making more money than you working in the mill," and they want to do the same thing. The black kids come from broken homes with a mother and no daddy.

These same teachers are the ones most likely to talk about lack of administrative support or of administrative make-work in the form of "paper work." Again, the complaints appear to be excessive, and to outstrip the impressions gained from direct observation:

> They load us down with paper work and don't handle students the way they need to 'cause they're in a never-never land....Students who cause repeated problems in class are still around....The problem is stupid policies from [the district office] and the federal courts. I'd like to see a judge teach a class where you can't throw a kid out 'cause of his constitutional rights.
>
> I don't dwell on discipline as much as I need to. The administration doesn't support us on discipline. They say do it, but they tie your hands....The tone has to be set at the top. People are socializing when they should be working. I mean administrators.

Teachers' blaming provides part of the link between their commitment and that of students. Student behavior also mediates between student commitment and that of teachers. Students are most likely to act out when they become alienated from the school and would prefer to be somewhere else but have not yet decided to leave. Teachers are worn down by disruptive behavior in the classroom and in the corridors. They find breaking up fights psychologically draining and are tired of constantly reminding students to bring necessary equipment to class.

By taking into account both teachers' comments and observed conditions, the field researchers were able to code schools on the strength of teachers' "blaming the students" and "blaming the system" or administrators. The comments of students and teachers and the field researchers' direct observations provided the basis for an overall rating of student behavior in the school.

Table 3 shows that the associations between the blaming variables and the commitment variables are consistently negative, indicating that where commitment is high blaming is low and vice versa. These associations are quite high. The lowest association is between teachers' commitment to teaching and blaming students (-.46), suggesting that even where teachers are not strongly interested in how they teach, they do not take it out on students. The highest is between students' commitment to place and blaming the students, which indicates that students do not want to be where teachers spend a great deal of time blaming them. The range of the associations between blaming the system and the commitment variables is narrower, but the associations are slightly higher on average. The associations between student behavior and the commitment variables are positive, suggesting that students act better where commitment is higher. The lowest association (.54) is with teachers' commitment to teaching, while the highest is with teachers' commitment to place. Apparently, teachers' decisions about where they want to be are more affected by student behavior than how they feel about their work.

Table 3

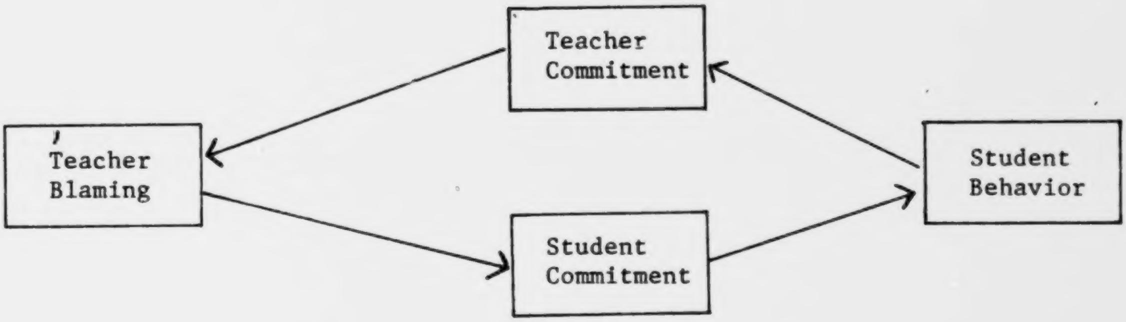
Kendall's Taus of "Blaming" Variables
with Commitment Variables
(n = 10 schools)

Commitment to	Blaming the		Student Behavior
	Students	System	
Teaching (Teachers)	-.46	-.65	.54
Students (Teachers)	-.65	-.75	.55
Place (Teachers)	-.74	-.71	.75
Learning (Students)	-.63	-.76	.66
Place (Students)	-.79	-.63	.71

These comments by teachers and students illustrate how mutually reinforcing cycles of commitment or alienation can develop. Figure 5 illustrates such a cycle. Students who are not committed begin to withdraw from class, make less and less effort to understand, and may start acting out. Getting no response, teachers become either lethargic or impatient and verbally abusive. It is probably unimportant where the cycle begins. Once a student who has been in school for eight or ten years comes into contact with a teacher who has worked for the same amount of time or longer, both will be well-primed to play out their sides of the cycle with little instigation.

Figure 5

A Cycle of Teacher and Student Commitment



Conclusion

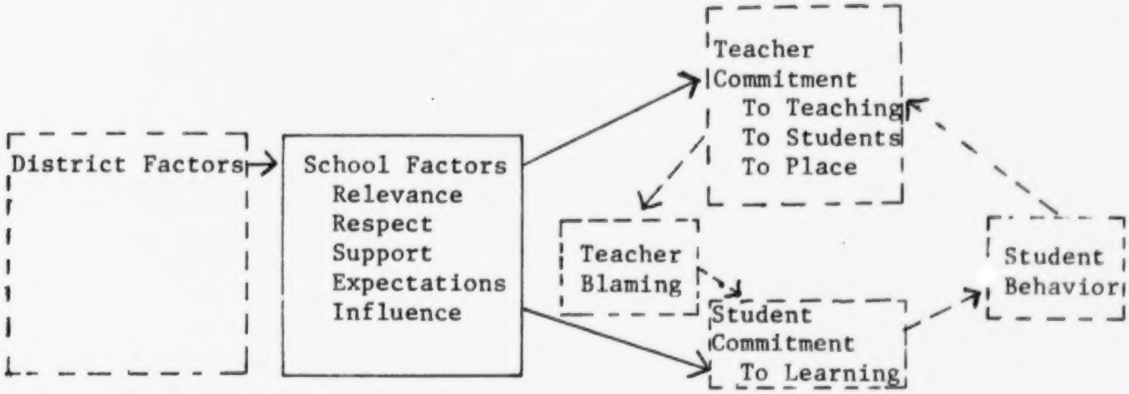
It is a serious oversimplification to speak about teacher and student "commitment" in singular terms. Teachers become committed to their students, to teaching, and to the place where they work, and an appropriate balance must be struck among these commitments. Strong commitment to teaching ensures high academic standards, but without commitment to students it can lead to a "cold" climate where students feel unwelcome. Yet, strong commitment to students without a commitment to teaching can create an environment that makes students welcome without ensuring that they learn. Similarly, students can be committed to the place without being committed to learning; they show up but do not work. A balance of commitments is necessary among both students and teachers for the high school to be successful. Among all of these, the commitment to teaching may be the most difficult to foster.

The commitments of teachers and students interact. In schools where the commitment is low, a negative cycle can develop in which low teacher commitment leads to blaming students and associated behavior which depresses student commitment, leading to disruptive behavior which, in turn, reduces teacher commitment further. The opposite may also occur. The commitments of teachers may be communicated to students who become more enthusiastic, which leads to behaviors that support teacher commitment. The existence of these interations suggests the need to intervene with both groups at the same time. Dropout programs that do not attend to teacher attitudes and teacher burnout programs that do not deal with student concerns will be less successful than more comprehensive programs that address the concerns of both groups.

III. SCHOOL FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENT AND TEACHER COMMITMENT

The previous chapter identified dimensions of student and teacher commitment and illustrated how the commitments of each group affect those of the other. If one is to intervene in the cycle of teacher and student commitment, however, it must be done by changing conditions in the school that create the context for those commitments. By addressing the third research question--what school factors influence the commitments of students and teachers?--this chapter provides guidance about where such intervention is useful. The approach to clarifying what these school factors are is to identify discrete variables from the field notes, assess their relationships with teacher and student commitments, and use theory and direct observations to clarify why such associations make sense. The specific variables identified were clustered into five distinct factors. Relevance is associated primarily with student commitment while influence relates to that of teachers. The other three factors--respect, support, and expectations--are associated with the commitments of both. Figure 6 illustrates how answering this research question further elaborates the original conceptual framework.

Figure 6
Second Elaboration of the Conceptual Model



District Factors
School Factors
Relevance
Respect
Support
Expectations
Influence
Teacher Commitment
To Teaching
To Students
To Place
Teacher Blaming
Student Commitment
To Learning
Student Behavior

Relevance

Relevance involves giving school activities some meaning to students. Often students see no connection between what they are expected to do in school and the rest of their lives. After observing a passive group of black students watch a gym teacher try to teach them European folk dances without even turning on the music, one field worker noted, "My own reaction was that the whole thing was ridiculous. These kids could dance, but this kind of dancing didn't have anything to do with where they were coming from." This folk dancing lesson had little meaning for the students involved. The way it was presented seemed to attack the pride of some. In contrast to that lesson, some teachers try, often in imaginative ways, to make classwork relevant. The science teachers in one school had students test drinking water and stream water to assess the levels of pollution in it. The teachers tried very hard to connect abstract, scientific issues with everyday concerns of students, but they acknowledged that it was often a struggle.

Higher achieving students are relatively patient with the school's definition of relevance, but low achieving students take a much narrower view of what is worth learning:

> I don't see the purpose of algebra. All you need is English and math. The rest just fills in time.
>
> I'm not gonna use science or history or world cultures. They should be electives.
>
> In English you need to learn to speak and read right, but reading stories is pointless.

Students who do poorly in school often question the legitimacy of the enterprise, as if the game they are losing is not really that important. That seems to be part of the thinking behind the students' statements presented above. Sometimes teachers do not explain the rationale for what is being taught. At other times, students do not accept it and do not see any connection to what they expect to do after school.

Yet there is one argument for relevance that most students find highly persuasive, that the activities in question will make them employable:

> I'm in the dental technician program.... It's pretty relevant. We make dentures and partials. We don't scrape. It's a two-year program, and we get a certificate at the end....I tell my friends to get in it. They like the pay. Its pretty decent. There's a place in ______ that will start you out at ten dollars an hour.
>
> I want to go into construction. School helped when I took construction.
>
> A high school diploma keeps students in school so they can get a good job, like being a tractor trailer driver.

It is quite clear that these students see a direct connection between what they are doing and their post-high school careers. Students who dislike "reading stories" or taking algebra (except for the group that intends to go to college) see no connection between those activities and future employment.

While students make their own judgements about what constitutes relevance for their future careers, some of them are woefully ignorant of just what is required of them and what their chances are:

> [To become a pediatrician] you have to go to community college for two years. Then you go to medical school for four years. After that you are an intern for two years. Then you are a regular nurse for two years. Then you do a residency, and after that you can be a doctor and start at $65,000 a year....If I'm not a pediatrician, I want to be a gynecologist.
>
> One senior believes he will be admitted to Yale University as a prelaw student. His high school grades were failing in the ninth and tenth grades, mediocre in the eleventh, and a D/C average as a senior. He is convinced he has it "up here" (pointing to his head). "I've just been playing around. You don't think I'm gonna make it, but I am. There was a student from here who went to Yale." (from the field notes)

Thus, in many cases their judgements on what constitutes relevance are seriously misguided and they assess career relevance with insufficient information.

Still, there is a relationship between perceived relevance and commitment. When schools are rated on the extent to which the students see a connection between what they are doing and their future plans, the associations with students' commitments are quite evident (see Table 4).

Table 4

Kendall's Taus of Factors Influencing Student and Teacher Commitment
(n=10 schools)

	Student Commitment to		Teachers Commitment to		
Factors	Learning	Place	Teaching	Students	Place
Relevance					
Sense that School Contributes to Future Plans	.79	.73	*	*	*
Programming for Relevance	.68	.53	*	*	*
Respect					
Sense Respect from Adults	.80	.66	*	*	*
Sense of Respect from Administrators	*	*	.80	.80	.71
Sense of Respect from Colleagues	*	*	.66	.63	.74
Collegiality Structures	*	*	.86	.68	.70
Support					
Building Quality	.48	.65	.29	.45	.62
Material Adequacy	*	*	.51	.34	.40
Administrative Support	.50	.73	.58	.50	.78
Bureaucratic Orientation	-.56	-.58	-.43	-.60	-.64
Consistency	.61	.66	.71	.58	.69
Expectations					
Instructional Press	.88	.89	.75	.71	.84
Influence					
Structures for Teacher Input	*	*	.87	.74	.78
Sense of Control	*	*	.58	.55	.75

* Kendall's tau not computed.

The extent to which students see this connection depends upon the design and implementation of formal systems in the school. Two are especially important. The first is the availability of career-oriented programs. Several of the schools in this study have special magnet programs geared to particular career areas: business and finance academies, technology magnets, and junior ROTC programs. These programs rarely serve large numbers of students, but they are highly motivating for the students in them. There are a few other programs that do not have the same career relevance but that also have a great deal of meaning for the students in them. These include a rather large music magnet program at one school.

The second component is the schools' counseling programs. While some counselors work within programs that enable them to do a good job of listening to students, addressing their personal needs, and helping them find colleges or careers that fit them, most are handicapped by pressures on their time. Chief among these pressures is simply the number of students counselors see. Another is the range of routine issues, clerical responsibilities, and special problems to be dealt with. These range from correcting errors in student assignments to classes to providing emergency counseling to disturbed students. A third pressure is the addition of non-counseling duties. In some schools, counselors have special responsibility to police the lunch rooms, handle discipline, or pass out bus tokens which keeps them from their legitimate counseling functions.

GOOD PRACTICE: RELEVANCE

> The counselors in one school do a number of special workshops to prepare students for important standardized tests like the PSAT, the SAT and tests required to enter the military. They have a career fair every year and take students to a district-wide college day. In addition, there are special programs such as "Women in the Military." One counselor described in detail the counseling she did with students to get them into post-high school jobs. A large number of students were placed in the

armed forces and many went to college. In some ways, the activities described were not unusual for many high schools. They were feasible in part because the counselors had no ancillary, non-counseling duties.

The field workers rated each school on its overall programming for relevance by taking into account the strength of its counseling and special career-oriented programs. The associations of this variable with student commitments are in the expected direction, but not as strong as some of the others (see Table 4). This may be due to the importance of special career oriented programs to the overall school rating. Since these programs directly touch only a minority of students in most schools, their effect on the whole student body is limited.

Respect

Respect has to do with how students see themselves treated by adults in the school. They want to know that they are being treated with decency and fairness by those adults. Stated in other terms, respect reflects students' perceptions of the results of teacher blaming. The teachers who blame students for difficult classroom situations are the ones most likely to display "an attitude" to students, to be abrupt with them, and not explain things in detail. Part of students' response to these events is a recognition that they are not respected, which in turn reduces commitment to the school.

There is a substantial association between student commitment and their sense that they are treated with respect (Table 4). The high tau for commitment to learning (.80) suggests that students' sense that they are accepted by adults in the school does more than just bring them in, it motivates them to take the academic enterprise seriously.

GOOD PRACTICE: RESPECT FOR STUDENTS

> This high school is characterized by its special "code" which is not a formal document but a way of life for people in the building. According to the principal, this code was established by the first principal when the building was opened fifteen years ago. She says it is "very cordial and humanistic with respect for children as well as adults." There are no formal rules governing dress but students do not wear shorts or punk hair cuts. There is an expectation that people will be cordial--everyone says good morning, for instance--but businesslike. Orderly behavior is expected at all times, but the school is "like a family." Teachers report seeing older students instructing younger ones on the code and ensuring that they live by it.

There is a fairly obvious parallel between respect as it applies to students and to teachers. Teachers are at the bottom of an extensive hierarchy and perceive that they have some of the same problems in being taken seriously by administrators as the students have in being taken seriously by them. In one teacher's words: "The principal and the vice principal have a punitive attitude towards teachers, like we deal with some kids."

Teachers look for respect from two sources, the building administration and colleagues. Teachers perceive a wide range of reactions from administrators. In one building, a teacher reported that "teachers don't get anything from the administration here or uptown that makes them feel important." In another, a teacher reported that "the administration administers this building with love and caring" and made clear that such caring applied to teachers as well as students.

Teachers also prize the respect of and interaction with their colleagues, and here again there was considerable range. At the negative extreme is one school where teachers complained extensively that their colleagues no longer tried to maintain discipline in the building. At an intermediate level are a number of schools where mutual recriminations are absent and a kind of surface friendliness prevails. In these schools, teachers report that "We get along very well. We're friendly towards each other, and we always say, 'Good morning.'" At the positive extreme is a school where teachers are close enough to share instructionally relevant matters. One teacher reports that "the degree of professionalism here is exceptional... Here people talk about educational issues; what works. It's intellectually stimulating."

GOOD PRACTICE: STAFF COLLEGIALITY

> At the time of the study, the district-wide Teacher Center was located in this school. Teachers from all other high schools in the district came to the school for an eight week mini-sabbatical to receive instruction in child development, instruction and classroom management, and their content areas. Instruction was provided to visiting teachers by regular teachers. From 25 to 30 of the staff were designated as clinical resident teachers (CRTs) to work with visiting teachers. Often visiting teachers would teach classes under the supervision of the CRTs. The Center program, along with other features (department office space, for instance) contributed to a substantial level of collegiality that was both exhilarating and exhausting. Teachers reported that "you do get camaraderie and advice here. Its very positive. I try to help people as much as I can. We talk about teaching."

In many of these schools, teachers have little opportunity to develop any sense of mutual respect because of their limited opportunities for interaction (see Lortie, 1975 on the pervasiveness of teacher isolation and Little, 1982 on the benefits of reducing it). Teachers spend most of their time in the classroom. Who they see during the school day is usually a result of their schedules (other teachers with the same preparation periods) and space. Many of these schools lack common department offices. In some schools, administrators recognize the problem and consciously address it by developing "collegiality structures" that facilitate interaction among teachers. First efforts are at a social level: Christmas and end-of-the-year parties. Other efforts go deeper. In one school where collegiality had been limited, the principals held a weekend, off-campus retreat with outside facilitators to build collegiality, and later rearranged space in the building to increase the number and pleasantness of departmental work spaces.

All three of these variables contribute to teacher commitment (see Table 4), presumably because they build a sense of acceptance and reduce isolation. Respect from administrators has a pervasive effect across all three types of teacher commitment. Associations with respect from colleagues are weaker except with commitment to teaching. Collegiality structures have an especially high association with commitment to place.

Support

Administrators support both students and teachers through the manipulation of physical arrangements and through a broader range of administrative actions. One physical arrangement is the quality of the building. The disrepair of several buildings visited certainly makes being in school an unpleasant experience. It may also signal that those responsible for the management of the district do not take the occupants of the building seriously. Some buildings in the study are extensively grafittied on the outside with additional marks on the inside. They have bathrooms with broken fixtures or locked doors, heating systems that do not function, and roofs that leak. Other buildings have been recently remodeled and are bright, cheery, and pleasant. Building quality as rated by the field researchers is associated with commitment to place among both students and teachers, but its relationship to student commitment to learning and teacher commitment to teaching and students is substantially lower (see Table 4).

Another physical element is the adequacy of instructional materials. In one school several teachers reported that they have only one complete set of textbooks for a course which is taught in several sections. This single set has to be used in class so no homework can be assigned; efforts to obtain more books have failed. In another school, a teacher complained that he must hide his window shades at the end of each school year for fear that they will never be replaced if they disappear over the summer. In contrast, two buildings were going through extensive modernization, and in one materials appeared to be abundant. Material adequacy is only weakly related to teacher commitment (see Table 4).

Three kinds of administrative action also contribute to student and teacher commitment. The first is administrative support, which focuses on the extent to which students and teachers are treated fairly and with some kindness and consideration. Among students, part of the issue is whether administrators listen to them or simply impose their own will:

> Mr. X doesn't go into the classroom. He doesn't listen to both sides of the story.
>
> Some principals ignore you while you're talking.
>
> Students respect principals who force people to do what's right and who care about students' future.

From the teachers' perspective, support includes backing teachers when problems arise, finding special resources, and simply offering understanding when things go poorly and appreciation when they go well. Principals who provide little support are viewed as stand-offish and unapproachable. In one school, teachers complain that the principal never comes into the teachers' lounge. At moderate levels, principals solve resource problems, provide an orderly environment, and acknowledge good work. As one teacher put it, "If you do a good job, the principal is not lacking in praise." At the extreme, teachers' requests are always looked into and there is an easy collegiality between them and administrators.

The opposite of administrative support is a bureaucratic orientation. A bureaucracy is governed strictly by rules with decisions made according to a clear hierarchy and records kept of all events. The result is often perceived as a cold, rigid organization that can undermine students' sense of respect and make it difficult for teachers to accomplish their work. In these schools, the bureaucratic orientation is indicated by a tendency to worry more about paper work and district politics than the welfare of students or staff. It is most apparent in the comments of teachers who are concerned about the principal's excessive consideration for the handling of paperwork:

> The principal is mostly concerned with when deficiency notices go out, when the forms are due, and with faculty meetings. In his bulletins he compliments the people who do those things, not the good teachers.

Another element of a strong bureaucratic orientation is a too great a concern with "looking good," especially with the district administration:

> [With regard to discipline,] the administrative concern is with PR. The principal doesn't want to hear from downtown.

The positive side of bureaucacy is administrative consistency in the extent to which rules, regulations, and procedures are applied fairly and uniformly to both students and teachers. This sense of fairness, along with the fact that it applies to the treatment of teachers as well as students, makes consistency more than simply tough discipline. From a student perspective, low consistency occurs when administrators say one thing one time and something else later, or two administrators (or teachers) handle the same type of event quite differently. In the extreme case, lack of consistency is equivalent to a breakdown in school discipline, but order can still be maintained even in an unfair and arbitrary manner.

These administrative actions have a greater influence on teacher and student commitment than physical arrangements. Both administrative support and consistency have moderately positive associations with all forms of student and teacher commitment. The associations for bureaucratic orientation are in the negative direction and only slightly smaller, except for the association with teachers' commitment to teaching which is quite low (see Table 4).

Expectations

An important source of commitment for both students and teachers is appropriate expectations. The degree to which this issue is adequately addressed varies considerably among the schools. This variation is captured by the concept of instructional press, or the extent to which administrators make instruction and achievement a priority and have high instructional expectations for teachers. The schools fit into three relatively distinct groups.

In most schools, there is little pressure for good teaching and student achievement. Sometimes goals are unclear. When asked about his goals, one principal gave a rambling, ambiguous answer and then said, "You have to excuse me. Its been a long time since I've been asked to think about my goals." In another school, when the principal brought a visiting dignitary into her room, one teacher was distressed that he did not comment on her teaching but instead pointed out a city all-star athlete in the room. In a third school, the principal stressed attendance, but without clearly linking it to achievement related issues.

In a second, smaller group of schools, efforts are being made to create support for instruction. In one school, teachers and administrators agree that "this is a place where teachers can teach" because of the way the school is managed, but there is no special training or pressure for them to teach better. These schools are also emphasizing incentives for students to succeed academically.

Finally, one school combines strong management and incentives for students with an extensive program of teacher training and inservice. This program contributes to an unusually high level of reflectiveness about instructional issues among teachers and an unusually high interest in teaching better.

GOOD PRACTICE: HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS

> One high school has consciously attempted to increase incentives for academic performance. Before the district tightened its academic eligibility requirements for athletics, the principal refused to let students with low grades participate in interscholastic sports. An "academic all-stars" program was developed that gave the equivalent of a letter jacket to students who got all As and lesser awards were made to students who got all As and Bs.

Instructional press has a profound effect on student commitment. In fact, it has the strongest association of all variables examined with both forms of student commitment (.88 and .89, see Table 4). Its relationship with all teacher commitment is nearly as impressive. It is strongly associated with teacher commitment to place (.84) and also shows quite high levels of association with commitment to teaching and students. Since instructional press has an unusually powerful association with both student and teacher commitment, it is important to note that its level, with the exception of the one school last mentioned, is generally low in these buildings.

GOOD PRACTICE: HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR TEACHERS

> The district Teacher Center described above has the effect of creating high expectations for teachers by making them more self-conscious about how they teach and how to teach better. This is apparent not only in the amount of discussion of teaching but also in the time teachers put in. Most of those interviewed reported coming to work early or staying late.

Influence

Teachers' level of commitment is shaped by their influence over relevant decisions. Two aspects of influence proved especially important: formal structures that permit teacher influence, and their perceptions of influence. With regard to formal structures, some schools establish arrangements that allow teachers to participate in decision making through committees or "open door policies" that really allow for teacher consultation with the principal. Low participation is indicated where neither of these was present, or where a formal committee was in place but the principal vetoed all of its decisions.

Moderate participation structures occurred in three ways: (1) when the structure was in place, but the principal went around it by consulting directly with teachers so it could not function, (2) when the school was so large that teachers did not understand the connection between their concerns and decisions made by formal bodies, or (3) where effective committees were established on an ad hoc basis but teacher input was not well utilized outside of those committees. Strong participation structures did not always include special committees. In one school, the principal made a policy of delegating decisions down to the lowest level and giving teachers considerable support with their ideas.

GOOD PRACTICE: SHARING INFLUENCE

> This high school has a well established tradition that permits sharing influence with staff without loss of administrative authority. When the previous principal left, the teachers asked the

> superintendent to name a principal from within in order to maintain that positive tradition. Teachers in departments decide who teaches what courses and how the schedule should work, but they have to make sure courses have reasonable enrollments. They have the option to add new courses. When a teacher wants to do an unusual activity--for instance, when a mathematics teacher wanted to have one class fill out income tax forms for students--the teacher tells the department chair who tells the principal.

In assessing teachers' sense of control, their lack of interest in major policy decisions is striking. After talking to superintendents and district staff at the start of each site visit about major questions of budget, curriculum, and new programs the contrast to the more mundane concerns of teachers was stark, indeed. Teachers' sense of control is enhanced when they help set a school's discipline code and it is implemented as designed, when they have the leeway and support they want to try new things in the classroom, and when they can work out their own schedules collectively within their department. Teachers are concerned about budgets, but usually when things have gone wrong and when they are not getting the supplies they need. In addition, there is an element of control that has little to do with formal governance: teachers feel a strong sense of control when students do not disrupt their classes frequently, i.e., when discipline is not an issue.

Strong teacher influence contributes substantially to teacher commitment (see Table 4). In fact, structures for teacher influence has the highest association with teachers' commitment to teaching (.87). Teachers' sense of control has an especially strong association with commitment to place (.75). Such shared influence should not be viewed as a threat to administrators, however, since the factors teachers want most to influence are those that directly affect the job they do in their classrooms.

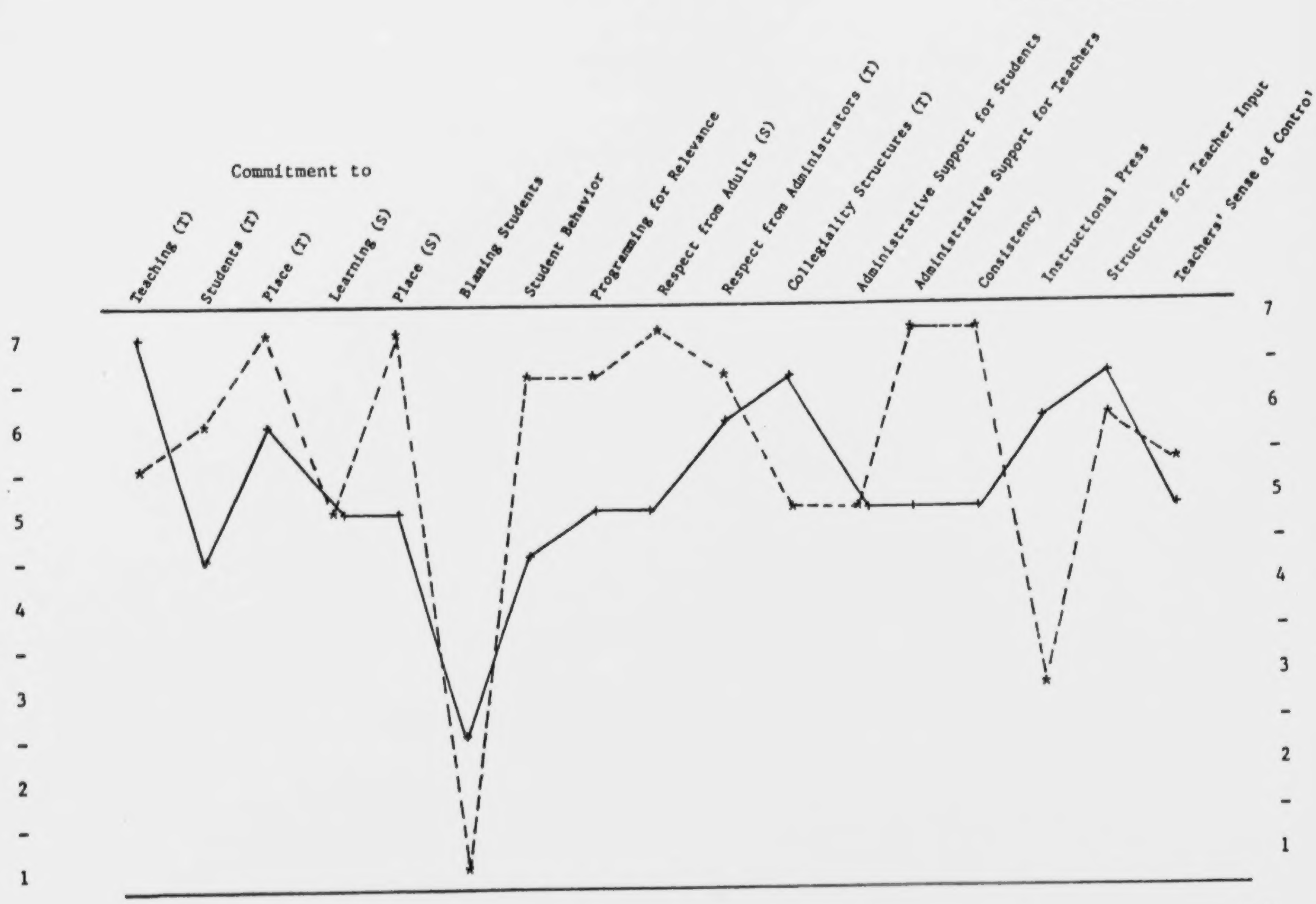
A Holistic View of the Findings

This variable-by-variable approach to analysis helps to identify the most important factors influencing student and teacher commitment, but it de-emphasizes the extent to which they work together. Using selected variables, Figure 7 presents profiles of the two schools in the sample which had the highest overall levels of commitment. Two important points are illustrated about how the various factors shape student and teacher commitment. First, in schools where commitment is high, most of the variables associated with commitment are also high (except blaming, which tends to be low). Apparently, it is not just one or two factors that contribute to commitment; rather, the set of school conditions working together builds commitment in school. This same congruence among the set of factors is apparent when one examines profiles of schools with low commitment (not shown).

Second, there are patterns of conditions that lead to different emphases in commitment. One school is notable for its teachers' strong commitment to teaching, the unusual collegiality among teachers, and the strong sense of instructional press. There are also extensive structures for staff input. The other school is notable for its strong commitment to place among both teachers and students. Teachers are somewhat more committed to students than to teaching (unlike the first school). Students behave well and teacher blaming of students is unusually low. Programming for relevance is also high. Most notable is the strong sense among teachers and students that they are respected by their superiors accompanied by a strong sense of administrative support and consistency. In sum, stressing different school factors leads to different patterns of commitment.

FIGURE 7

Profiles of Two High Schools



Implication: Need for a Dual Strategy

This analysis supports the current wisdom about the improvement of schooling, but it also looks back to the wisdom of an earlier era which is now less favorably regarded. Current thinking stresses the use of external pressures to improve education, such as the imposition of high expectations and the application of tough standards. These findings certainly support that view. Instructional press has the strongest associations with the student commitment variables and teacher commitment to place. Its associations with teacher commitment to teaching and to students are also impressive. People do become more committed when they are asked to do more.

However, there are other themes in these findings that look back to the "relevant" '60s for approaches to improvement that stress building up the individual and relying on intrinsic rewards. These strategies presently do not receive equal attention. With students, these strategies revolve around meaning and respect. Students are more committed to school when they see the purpose of what they are doing--especially when their school work clearly contributes to life after high school--as is apparent when one examines associations with the variable "sense that school contributes to future plans." Moreover, they work harder when adults treat them with respect and fairness (sense of respect from adults). The key themes for teachers include influence and respect. Structures for teacher influence has the first or second strongest association with all the teacher commitment variables. Collegiality structures and respect from administrators are highly associated with teachers' commitment to both students and teaching.

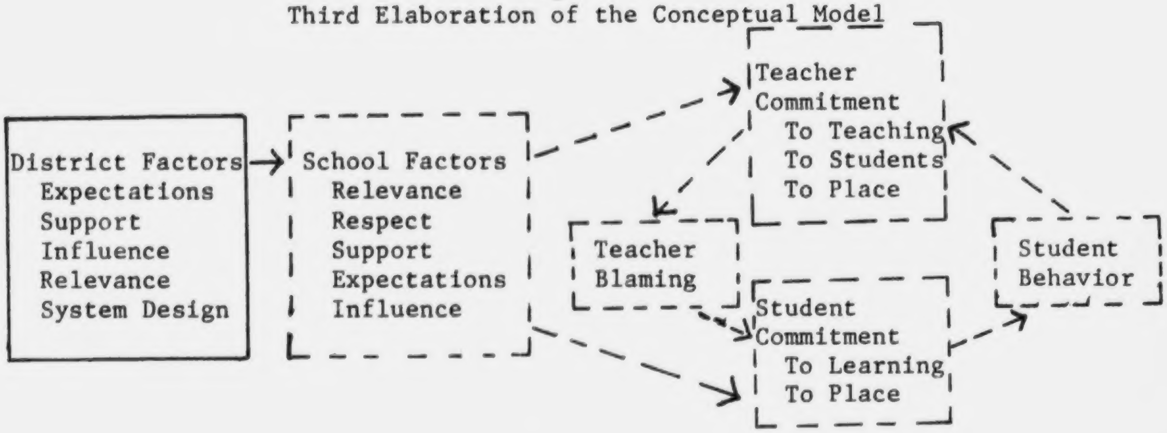
If instructional press represents an externally oriented approach to improvement that comes through setting standards and mandating performance, these other three share an internally oriented strategy that relies upon acknowledging the value of the individual and helping the individual understand the worth of current activities. Both approaches are valid, and both are incomplete. As the profiles in Figure 7 indicate, a combination of factors is necessary to build high commitment. What is needed to build student and teacher commitment is a dual strategy that sets high expectations and builds up the individual.

IV. DISTRICT OPERATIONS AND COMMITMENT

The previous chapters have examined factors at the school level that contribute to alienation and commitment. School factors have a direct impact on student and teacher orientations to their work. However, schools exist in a larger district context which mediates and interprets state mandates and requirements and establishes policies and programs that have a major influence on school operations. District operations may facilitate or hinder commitment at the school level, although at times its effect may be neutral. Sometimes the absence of certain district factors may deter the potential for commitment. Overall, there is ample evidence that the creation of school conditions which promote commitment depends in important ways on how the district is administered (Fullan, 1982; Rosenblum & Louis, 1981).

To describe the district's contribution to student and teacher commitment, this chapter addresses the fourth research question: What district factors affect the school factors which, in turn, influence the commitments of teachers and students? Rather than taking the more formal approach used in the two previous chapters of defining discrete variables, this chapter relies on a less formal analysis of interviews and observations to identify issues where the district plays a key role. Five common factors emerged from this search and were added to the conceptual model (see Figure 8). Four of these are similar to and overlap with the school factors: expectations, support, influence, and relevance. The fifth domain, which is unique to the district level, is system design. Each of these is discussed below.

Figure 8
Third Elaboration of the Conceptual Model


District Factors
Expectations
Support
Influence
Relevance
System Design
School Factors
Relevance
Respect
Support
Expectations
Influence
Teacher Commitment
To Teaching
To Students
To Place
Teacher Blaming
Student Commitment
To Learning
To Place
Student Behavior

Expectations

In the discussion of school factors affecting commitment, instructional press (i.e., the set of activities through which high academic expectations are set for both students and teachers) proved to be a powerful variable. Serious limitations in the extent to which this press has been developed within the schools visited were also noted. A contribution that the district can make to school performance is to create an external (i.e., district-initiated) instructional press with a constant focus on teaching and learning. This can be done by setting expectations and standards for students, teachers, and schools.

Three of the districts in the study (Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Washington, DC) created an environment of instructional press through the development of a city-wide curriculum testing program. At a minimum, this program specifies a substantial portion of the content to be taught in each grade, provides for common criterion-referenced tests to be used throughout the system, and sets promotion standards for students. Such a formal system provides the basis for a strong instructional press from the district by specifying what students are expected to learn and testing to determine whether they have learned it. In the three districts where such a system exists, it appears to make an important contribution to school performance.

Since these curriculum testing programs are so important, two cautions about them must be noted. First, there are ways they can reduce commitment. If the program sets performance standards that are impossible to reach because students lack the skills required to learn the curriculum of a specific grade, both student and teacher commitment may suffer. Some teachers interviewed complained about the difficulty of teaching more advanced subjects to students who did not already have "the basics." The advocates of the system suggest that this is a temporary problem. As these systems mature, it is argued, students will not advance to a given level until they develop the prerequisite skills. Whether this supposition is correct or not will require a more focused examination than is possible in this study.

Second, it is noteworthy that the two districts in states with the most extensive state-mandated minimum competency testing programs (Baltimore and Newark) do not have such curriculum testing programs. Their efforts are driven more by the need to comply with state requirements. There does not appear to be the same level of enthusiasm for and ownership of state requirements as those that are locally developed (this is also discussed in the section on influence). The state programs do not appear to have the same effect of raising standards as do the district-initiated ones.

While the curriculum testing programs in the three cities contribute to an instructional press, they are only part of what was meant by high expectations in the early school effectiveness research (e.g., Edmonds, 1979). In that research, high expectations combined two elements: clear standards of performance with a belief that all children could reach those standards, and (implicitly) that all teachers could teach to the standards. The curriclum testing systems clearly specify standards and some of the content to be taught to reach those standards. However, because they are formal systems, a variety of beliefs can accompany them. In some districts, top administrators generally appear to project the optimistic belief that, with effort and support, the teaching staff can achieve the standards set for them. Others hold the more pessimistic view that staff cannot meet appropriate performance standards. These beliefs are known by staff and appear to affect teacher commitment.

Support

District support that is crucial for teachers and students comes through staff development, material support, and "moral support," or pride in and acceptance of the school.

Staff Development

The importance of district curriculum and testing programs for promoting high expectations was noted earlier. However, these are not likely to work unless implemented by effective and committed teachers. This cannot be achieved by school leadership alone. District support for staff development is an important form of support for enhanced teacher commitment.

Three considerations underscore the need for more attention to staff development in most of these districts. The first is the demographics of the teaching force. A majority of the teachers interviewed had been on the job for more than ten years. In many cases, they had worked most of their careers in their current schools. Many of these teachers felt trapped by salary and retirement considerations which led them to continue teaching even though their commitment to students and teaching had been substantially reduced. While there are many reasons for this sense of entrapment, the problem is excerbated by a sense of boredom, or lack of stimulation. Learning opportunities and opportunities for growth through staff development or other means can overcome this (Rosenholtz, 1985).

At least two of these cities anticipate hiring large numbers of new teachers in the next few years. This will change the nature of the demographic problem, but not its extent. New teachers do not stay long in urban schools. The problems of maintaining control are especially difficult for these teachers, so they either transfer out or leave teaching (Bruno & Doscher, 1981). Without a coordinated staff development program, some of the schools in this study risk becoming high turnover organizations with new teachers coming and going over an extended period.

A second staff development consideration is the special training needs of teachers working with low achieving students. Many teachers find it unrewarding to work with this population. Yet, there are skills that help teachers avoid unnecessary confrontations, maintain order, present and explain content, and otherwise get students to learn. Instruction in those skills could be helpful to a great many teachers.

The third staff development need stems from the new district initiatives themselves, (e.g., instructional supervision, use of competency-based curricula). These often create a need for teachers to develop substantial new skills and techniques related to the initiatives. As many as eighteen months may be required for teachers to develop the knowledge to master new instructional approaches. Ongoing assistance increases the likelihood that teachers will learn the necessary skills rather than avoid implementation of the new approach.

There are also important barriers to staff development activities at the secondary level which district policies can address. District office staff point to the limited interest in voluntary staff development at the high school level and report that they typically spend more time working with elementary teachers. One of the principals suggested that the logistics of freeing time for school-wide staff development are much more difficult at the secondary level. More people are involved and it is difficult to arrange coverage or special release for so many students. But there are some innovative approaches that are being used within the five cities in the study. One of these is the Schenley Teachers' Center in Pittsburgh (which had its last year of operation in 1986-87). This approach has three salient features. First, it relies on teachers teaching teachers. Most of the instruction is provided by clinical resource teachers (CRTs) whose classes are used for practice purposes. Thus, it provides opportunities for lecture, demonstration, and actual practice with real students. Further, teachers have an opportunity to work with a range of student groups. The greatest renewal may actually occur among the CRTs, who find their work extremely stimulating, if exhausting. Second, the teacher center provides a staff of replacement teachers who take the classes of those who come to the Center for training. Finally, while expensive and requiring considerable district expenditures, it is a project local businesses are willing to support.

Material Support

Schools depend on the central office for allocations, budgets, and material support. The material and physical conditions of the schools are often very bleak, and can reinforce a sense of low commitment and low morale in the schools. The material support problem stems from a lack of basic supplies, such as books, paper, and window shades. Sometimes these are the result of financial constraints that make providing such supplies difficult. In other cases, the financial resources appear to be available but are not "delivered" as usable material in the schools. Whether the problem is one of availability, inadequate distribution from the central office, or inequity is not always clear. What is evident, however, is that the lack of materials or a well maintained physical environment is not only a handicap to effective teaching, but is also viewed as a withholding of support for the school and its staff and students.

Moral Support

A third kind of support, more affective in nature, was found to influence commitment in the schools: the degree to which district level leaders expressed support and pride in the schools. Often this was evident by the opposite; the expressed disapproval of the secondary schools by the state. Awareness of this disapproval reinforced the low self esteem and low commitment of staff and increased their sense of isolation and alienation.

Influence

Although teachers did not necessarily want major policy influence, having influence over decisions that affect their work was found to be a major factor contributing to their commitment in the school-level analysis. Upward influence from school to district is also an important issue in school-district relationships. Two specific issues were especially important: influence on staff allocations and assignments, and influence on the curriculum testing programs discussed above.

Essentially, all five districts allocate teachers to schools through formulas based on student enrollment. Depending on district review, principals have some discretion within that formula in the selection of specialists. However, it is difficult if not impossible to get more than is allowed by the formula or to make such substitutions as using paraprofessionals instead of professionals for certain tasks. The principal also lacks the discretion to remove specific teachers (e.g., poor performers) from the building except under conditions which are very difficult to achieve and justify.

Teacher departures through transfers or reductions-in-force (RIFs) are typically governed by seniority rules. So are voluntary transfers, and in an important way. Most of these districts distinguish between building and district seniority. District seniority determines the order in which teachers are RIFed, but building seniority determines the order in which teachers are transferred out of a building. If a teacher is transferred involuntarily, no building seniority is lost; the person has the same seniority in the new building as she or he would have in the old building. However, if the individual transfers voluntarily, building seniority is lost; and the individual risks being transferred out again very quickly. This rule severely constrains the number of voluntary transfers.

Together, these rules create a within-building entrapment for older teachers that matches the more frequently noted occupational entrapment. The effect is that the same corps of principal and teachers may stay together for years, whether they work well together or not. Even though some of these policies have been negotiated by the teachers' unions, this is quite frustrating to some teachers.

Principals are most likely to define the constraints of formulas as an influence issue. They point to teachers they would like to remove, to situations where they have good reason for wanting to trade a teacher for two paraprofessionals, or to special programs they want to pilot and for which they would like temporary exemptions from the staffing formulae. They view these limitations as a case of having responsibility without authority. Teachers do not usually define the issue as an influence problem. On the surface, they are more reconciled to the situation. Yet, the sense of entrapment remains.

There appears to be good reason to look for ways to bypass these staff allocation formulas, at least on occasion. With a number of teachers interviewed, it appeared that a change of location might provide a stimulus that would be useful in recommitting them to their work.

There is also a relationship between how staff are assigned to schools and teacher and student commitment. At present, most principals have little or no authority with regard to which teachers are assigned to their schools. It is interesting to note that the two schools in the study which stand out from the others as having especially high levels of staff and student commitment were both totally staffed at one point in their history by a principal given discretion to choose the teachers he or she wanted. In one case, this selection was made well over a decade ago, and there has been turnover since. However, the remaining original teachers make up the leadership of that school. These examples, together with the sentiments expressed by both principals and teachers, suggest that the commitment of both groups would be enhanced if arrangements could more often be made for greater discretion in staffing.

Shared influence was also found to be important regarding the curriculum testing programs. All three districts with such programs had provision for staff participation in their design, either through establishing curriculum objectives or determining the items on a common test. These provisions did, in fact, help build teacher acceptance of the programs.

There are some anomalies, however, that point out the difficulty of sharing influence in large school districts. In some cases, teachers appeared to be much less accepting of the new program than might be expected, given the apparent level of staff influence. While it is not totally clear why this is the case, two observations offer hints. First, most objections to the program appeared in the district with the strongest teacher union and the greatest history of worker-management conflict. This suggests that past events may have colored teachers' willingness to recognize influence sharing with administration.

Second, there were serious discrepancies in the descriptions of influence sharing by district staff and teachers. What appears to have happened in this and another district is that district staff relied on department heads to communicate between themselves and regular teachers. This indirect communication contributed to slippage and information loss, especially with regard to how teacher input affected the resulting product.

Relevance

At the school level, a sense of relevance or purpose was found to be a source of student commitment. The district plays an important part in conveying relevance, especially for teachers, but communication slippage is a recurring theme which indicates that it is extremely difficult for district leaders to project the meanings they want to convey through their actions. The example of the curriculum testing programs is far from isolated. Often superintendents take steps or make statements intended to project a vision to teachers without that meaning coming through. For instance, two years ago a superintendent removed the principal of one of the schools in this study because the principal said the school could be improved by removing a large portion of the students. In large part, the superintendent intended to convey the message that the expectation some students could not be helped was unacceptable. However, this message was not heard. Throughout interviews in that school, teachers returned to the abrupt firing and asked why it had happened, saying that it appeared unfair and unwarranted.

The difficulty in communicating the relevance of new policies is an important obstacle to superintendents bent on improving their districts. The five participating superintendents share similar goals about how they would like their districts to improve. In several, top staff or a cadre of special, high-energy individuals throughout the ranks in the central office share a clear vision of how the district can be improved. The extent to which this vision is shared by rank-and-file teachers varies considerably, however. In the extreme cases, going from the central office to schools was almost like going from one world to another. While one could find in the schools the specific programs described in the central office, the meanings attributed to those programs were quite different. What was an exciting opportunity to district leaders was just another bureaucratic constraint in the schools. In the more positive cases, teachers saw some value in what was proposed and thought it might help, although the level of enthusiasm for the change was quite different.

Where the larger vision of top district leaders was not communicated effectively to teachers and principals, it contributed to a kind of displacement of effort through which means became ends in themselves. Thus, where the curriculum testing programs were strong, or state minimum competency programs were an issue, teachers began teaching to the test. Similarly, in some districts the push to get attendance up became an end in itself and the reasons for low attendance were poorly analyzed or not acted upon. This led to a kind of symbolic problem solving. For instance, a computerized telephone calling machine that could automatically make calls to hundreds of students' homes was touted as a great panacea, even though it appeared that such calls would have little lasting effect since the reasons students cut class were not addressed.

There are a number of reasons why the vision developed at the top of the system is not always shared at the bottom. Most generally, top leaders and teachers have different outlooks shaped by their work. The top leaders are required to think in broad, system wide terms, while teachers focus on the concrete issues of getting through the day with particular classes and students. As mentioned previously, a second reason in some districts is a history of labor-management strife. Where there is a history of polarized relationships, teachers are more suspicious of new initiatives emanating from the central office. Finally, there is a problem of indirect communication.

In large districts, top leaders have to work through a variety of middle managers, including principals, supervisors, and central-office department heads. With each added layer in the line of communication or each case of multiple communication (e.g., supervisor and principal), there is more room for the vision at top to become diluted or confused.

What seems to characterize the districts where the vision at the top is understood by teachers is an assertive approach by those leaders. They identify clear tasks which are assigned to specific individuals who are given a great deal of leeway and support in carrying out those tasks. At the same time, they are willing to be unconventional in finding people to do the work, going around the regular bureaucracy to find the right person to do the job. They express a great deal of faith in the people working for them, and there are few or no recriminations about personnel quality--leading to the belief in staff ability noted above. However, they are willing to move the people who are not producing and have done so.

System Design

The central office of a school district has considerable discretion regarding district policy and the design of various elements of the system. Among these are elements that can have considerable influence on factors affecting commitment in the high schools. Some of these have been discussed above under the categories of expectations (e.g., curriculum testing programs), influence (e.g., staff allocation policies), and support (e.g., staff development programs). This section discusses design elements more structural in nature, and includes the following: role design and definition of district-level positions that impinge on secondary school operations, particularly those variably known as supervisors or curriculum specialists;

role design and responsibilities for within school positions, particularly department heads and guidance counselors; and the mix of schools in the system, as, for example, the mix of comprehensive high schools, city-wide "test" schools, magnet schools, and special magnet programs within schools.

Beginning with district-level positions, almost all of the districts have a content area specialist or supervisor position which works directly with teachers and department heads on curricular issues. This position can potentially provide an important instructional support role in secondary schools. While these individuals work on content-related issues, they are also the front-line people for ensuring that important district initiatives are understood by teachers and implemented in the classroom.

In several districts, classic staff-line problems and other conflicts were noted in the relationships between these individuals and the principal, department heads, and teachers. For example, when a district specialist intervened with individual teachers, the department head felt that the specialist was not in the building enough to understand what the teacher was doing. More generally, as district representatives, the supervisor may add to the department head's burden by requiring what is perceived as excessive paper work. Although the supervisor works with department heads and teachers, these building-level staff report to and are evaluated by the principal. When the wishes of the principal and supervisor do not coincide, the department head or teacher is more likely to comply with the principal's views than the supervisor's.

Actions like these undercut the supervisor's ability to gain the support of teachers and department heads; they create friction. To be effective, supervisors must rely on their ability to persuade, to shape the work of teachers and department heads. Yet, in some districts, supervisors find it difficult to take the steps that make them persuasive to teachers. They are often unable to provide the direct content-related and instructional assistance that can reinforce instructional press.

The problem is not necessarily solved by reorganizing as much as by carefully defining the role and providing training. It requires the supervisors to be given the opportunity to support teachers' and department heads' work, that the need to enforce unpopular mandates (paperwork) be reduced, and that they be trained in the communication skills required by the job. At the same time, the authority issue can be reduced if higher level officials coordinate the priorities of principals and supervisors.

Second, the within-building job-design issue refers to the counselor and department head roles. These are often not effectively defined or are overloaded with inappropriate duties. The importance of counselors in providing a sense of purpose for students, especially through career counseling, was noted earlier. Department heads are well placed to provide leadership that contributes to an instructional press. They are close to the regular teachers and are supposed to have better than average expertise in their fields. In several districts, they have substantial released time that could be put to such a use. However, both counselors and department heads are overloaded with paperwork, supplies and books maintenance, and other routine tasks. Moreover, in some schools, both positions are required to take on such unrelated responsibilities as cafeteria monitoring and covering classes when substitutes cannot be found. It is important to relieve these individuals of duties that keep them from addressing their primary responsibilities. In some cases, this can be done by better use of available resources. In others, it may require additional resources, such as clerical and paraprofessional support. These role design and resource issues are part of the overall system design.

A third issue is the mix of secondary schools, which typically includes comprehensive high schools, "test" and magnet schools, and magnet programs within comprehensive schools. In several of the districts, teachers and administrators expressed frustration, even anger and reduced commitment, about the "creaming" of students, resources, and staff to the select schools. This issue poses a dilemma to district policy makers who, on the one hand, must recognize the special needs and some of the benefits that accrue to students in the special programs, while on the other hand, recognizing the impact on the remainder. Commitment in the "regular" schools can be enhanced (or at least not reduced) when district staff are vigilant to provide them the needed support, resources, expectations, and pride.

Summary

School factors are the primary sources of commitment for students and teachers, but schools are part of a larger district context. Several district factors were found to facilitate the schools' capacity to foster commitment, and their absence was found to reduce commitment. Many of these factors were similar to those at the school level, for just as teachers and students look for support, expectations, influence, and relevance from school leaders so do those leaders look to the district. Among the district factors that were found to be important are: material support, support for staff development, instructional press from the central office in the form of curriculum and testing programs, school-level influence in district policies, and good communication of district priorities to lend meaning and sense of purpose at the school level and thereby reduce "symbolic problem solving" rather than real school improvement. In addition, the district can assist commitment through some system design elements, including more effective role definition and support of district-level curriculum specialists, department heads, and guidance counselors.

These are issues to which district leaders can turn in developing plans of action to support further commitment within the schools.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The previous chapters highlighted the mutually reinforcing nature of student and teacher commitment and illustrated how cycles can develop to elevate or depress the commitments of both groups. It was suggested that the school and district-based factors that affect how those cycles play out include relevance, respect, support, expectations, and influence. This chapter returns to those factors in order to identify courses of action that school and district administrators can take in order to improve both student and teacher commitment.

The recommendations are based on two assumptions that should be made explicit. The first is that school improvement is a context-specific activity. Over 20 years of planned change research clearly indicates that what works well in one school or district may not work well in another because of the specifics of history, staff beliefs, community support, and a host of other factors. The recommendations that are offered here are based on observations in 10 schools and five districts at one point in time. They have a basis in the reality of those schools. The reader, however, must determine the utility of these recommendations for her or his own situation.

The second assumption is that school improvement is a long-term process that transcends any specific "innovation" or new program. Each new program may take a year or more to design and implement, but each may only address part of the issue for a specific school. Moreover, a certain amount of trial-and-error is required as different approaches are tried and assessed. The school or district administrator who is serious about increasing the commitment of teachers and students must be prepared for an extended effort, and throughout that process should avoid confusing means (specific programs or procedural changes) with ends (heightened staff and student commitment and increased student learning).

Within this framework the recommendations which follow represent a discrete set of best-practice activities, supported by current research, which either were observed in the field or were stimulated by some of the things observed in the site visits. They do not constitute a program. Administrators, therefore, should select and incorporate into a comprehensive program those recommendations which address the particular needs of their district. Recommendations are summarized in Figure 9 and are discussed below.

Relevance

Relevance, in the context of this report, is defined as giving school activities some meaning to the lives of students. This approach includes all aspects of school life both in and out of the classroom. Therefore, relevance of extra curricular activities to the students (e.g., school clubs, sports programs, tutorials, special events projects) have to be considered in addition to the applicability of the formal instructional program. Specific recommendations which reflect this major finding follow.

Meet with Student "Leaders"

A series of meetings with student "leaders" should be initiated by the principal. Students selected would be those who are instrumental in shaping student opinion and response to the school. The leaders involved would not be exclusively the demonstrated high achievers. A "mix" of students is

Figure 9

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

	Relevance	Respect	Support	Expectations	Influence
Principal	• meet with student leaders • provide input for students into funding of extra-curricular activities	• conduct "awareness" sessions for staff • initiate student building committee • create opportunities for staff interaction	• involve staff in selection of textbooks, supplies, and equipment • foster linkages among faculty and students	• develop programs of student academic incentives • establish faculty-student curriculum committee • establish linkages with the teachers' union concerning curriculum and instruction	• involve faculty in consultative role for appropriate school operational decisions • delegate decisions to departments
District Office	• assess relevance of curricular offerings		• provide opportunities for staff development activities	• assess effectiveness of district curricular specialists • initiate district-wide incentive program based upon student achievement	• include teachers in planning of staff development days
Superintendent	• revamp counseling allocations and responsibilities • engage "career" specialists • increase number of "academies" programs	• provide funding for staff resource centers • highlight and "model" the respect theme	• review staff assignment procedures and transfer policies • investigate the feasibility of early retirement inducements	• clearly communicate district instructional goals and objectives • provide funding for incentive programs and curricular reviews • lead a yearly retreat for district teaching and administrative staff	• establish district Teachers' Advisory Council • develop networks of high schools to address particular problem areas

desirable in light of the finding that higher achieving students exhibit *more patience with the school's definition of relevance while those* who are lower achievers take a more narrow view of what is worth learning. The group would be ad hoc and would meet on an "as needed" basis. It should be small enough to facilitate maximum individual participation. The number of students in the group should outnumber faculty participants.

Key teachers and counselors would be invited to attend and to participate. The overall purpose of the group would be to assess the relevance of the school curricular and extra-curricular activities and to provide suggestions for meaningful and feasible changes. Its role would be advisory in nature. Students selected would be those who are instrumental in shaping student opinion and response to the school.

Provide Student Input into Funding of Extra-Curricular Activities

Extra-curricular programs represent for many students the most significant and most relevant of school activities. For a few, participation in such programs is the only reason for regular attendance or staying in school at all. One may take issue with their judgment in such cases, but there is no question (as indicated earlier) that there is a relationship between perceived relevance and commitment. The task, then, is to extend this commitment to other aspects of the school environment.

The principal should provide for student input into decisions related to the use of funds for extra-curricular activities. Options to consider would include using the existing student government apparatus, or enlisting captains of sports teams and the student leaders of special activities (e.g., school band, cheerleaders, monitorial/service squads). This group would provide consultative assistance to the school administration in the distribution of resources among various extra-curricular groups. A member of the school administration and a student would function as co-chairs. Agenda items might well include discussions of the impact and relevance of current activities and of the feasibility of initiating new extra-curricular programs or the ramifications of "phasing out" any that are not successful.

Assess Relevance of Curricular Offerings

A significant number of students indicated quite clearly that they did not believe the school curriculum and instruction was relevant to their lives. For them, the connection has not been made between what is learned in today's classroom and the outside world. Curriculum content, however, is often determined in response to local and state mandates. Thus the dilemma: how do we make the curriculum relevant to students and still meet the legal requirements of the city and/or state?

The superintendent should commission a study, using outside experts, to assess the relevance of curricular offerings in the district's high schools. Student perceptions of relevance would be assessed through questionnaires and interviews and suggestions for change would be solicited. The results of such a study would provide a basis for school and district planning which would provide guidelines to teachers in how best to establish the relevance of a particular body of content.

Revamp Counseling Allocations and Responsibilities

A realistic opportunity should be provided for counselors to work directly with more students on those concerns which affect commitment (e.g., career counseling, college advisement). Such efforts will have enormous resource implications in some districts and schools. Some existing programs may have to be dropped; some contractual provisions may need to be reexamined and modified in subsequent negotiations; high cost extracurricular programs which benefit only a few students may need to be cut back. The superintendent will have to become directly involved in these processes. Whatever the costs, the yield of an adequate cadre of highly motivated and administratively supported guidance counselors who can concentrate on working directly with students is worth the price.

Engage "Careers Specialists"

Career-oriented programs are important in fostering commitment, but at present they do not serve many students. Through the superintendent's office, a "careers specialist" should be engaged to work with the staff and students of the district high schools. This person would be responsible for compiling and disseminating information pertinent to feasible career aspirations for students. Provision should be made to inform teachers and students on the current and projected status of the job market. Students not planning to attend college would also be included in the program; particular emphasis for this population would be on job placement assistance. The careers specialist would establish direct linkages with local business and industry representatives. Key staff from the district high schools (e.g., guidance counselors, vocational education instructors) would meet regularly with the district specialist.

The careers specialist need not be a professional educator. The skills for this position do not require a pedagogical background and considerable red tape in hiring procedures might be avoided. The superintendent should also be a "hands on" presence in the process through involvement in the final interviews and in the selection of the successful candidate.

Increase the Number of "Academies" Programs

Students look for a direct connection between what they are doing (in school) and their post-high school activities. This "seeking for relevance" is particularly true of those for whom high school is the educational terminus. Thus, relevant career-oriented programs can be of considerable value in meeting their needs.

Several of the schools involved in the study have "academies" which are vocationally-oriented schools within schools, where the training of students for specific careers begins early in high school. They cover a wide range of occupations, including electronics, hotel management, cooking, auto mechanics, finance, and the health professions. Direct links with business and industry are characteristic of these programs. The outreach of the academies is severely constrained because of the limited number of students and their high per capita cost. However, in view of their relevance for students and their successes to date, the superintendent should consider a long-term effort aimed at increasing the enrollment in existing academies and, where feasible, establishing new ones.

Respect

For students, respect concerns how they perceive themselves being treated by adults in the school. Teachers seek respect from school administrators and from colleagues. Both groups seek and respond positively to interactions which affirm their worth and importance.

An effort to promote respect in a school might involve such measures as extracting from the school history those positive elements that can be shared as a matter of pride, involving students and faculty in operational decisions, providing opportunities for collegial interaction, and initiating staff development activities that deal with the attitudinal and perceptual realms as well as with cognitive areas. Some specific recommendations which build upon the positive correlation between respect and commitment follow.

Conduct "Awareness" Sessions for Staff

The principal should plan at least one staff conference per semester devoted to heightening the "awareness" level of faculty to the needs of students. Such a meeting might begin with a discussion of how students' perceptions of staff attitudes towards them can impact significantly on their commitment to the school and to its instructional programs. School counselors could lead a discussion on the non-academic needs of students. Another meeting could involve a report from student "leaders" on "the best and the worst" of the school. A third conference might focus on successful programs elsewhere that have a positive impact upon students' morale and perceptions of their school. Another option could involve engaging an outside expert in sensitivity training who could lead an interactive workshop on a staff development day or during a special school or district retreat.

Initiate Student Building Committee

In recognition of the importance of student "commitment to place," the principal should authorize the formation of a student-led building committee. This committee would be charged with providing input into all major decisions affecting the appearance and use of the facility. The committee would have a faculty advisor but would essentially be responsible for determining its own recommendations to the school administration and, through proper channels, to the custodial staff. The committee would also be encouraged to devise, develop, and implement projects to enhance the physical character of the building and to involve the student body in the effort.

Create Opportunities for Staff Interaction

Teachers seek respect from their colleagues as well as from school administrators. Therefore, opportunities for faculty to interact with each other should be initiated and encouraged by the principal. These interactions might be in formal settings, such as panel discussions at faculty conferences, or part of a symposium during a staff development day. Less formal interactive environments can also be fostered through the creation of department workrooms and through the use of ad hoc inter-departmental committees to examine a particular school problem. The only limitations should be that the "coming together" is around professional matters and that every effort be made to cut across departmental lines.

Provide Funding for Staff Resource Centers

As previously stated, in a number of the schools visited teachers have little opportunity to develop any sense of mutual respect because of their limited opportunities for interaction. Therefore, the superintendent should provide funding to establish a staff resource center in each high school in the district. Each center would be a repository for current educational literature (e.g., journals, periodicals, newspaper articles, Education Week). In addition, new and pertinent books, models, videotapes, and microfiche might be available. The superintendent's contribution to the center would include one paraprofessional staff allocation, some comfortable furniture, and funds for an initial purchase of equipment and materials. Each school would then be charged with the maintenance and updating of the center and its contents. Setting up the facility would also provide an opportunity to bring together disparate groups of teachers to discuss the content and operation of the center.

Highlight and "Model" the Respect Theme

As the educational leader of the district, the superintendent is a continuing source of curiosity, interest, and attention on the part of many district teachers and administrators. Words and actions of the educational leader are carefully scrutinized and analyzed. Major decisions are analyzed in terms of motives and impact. There is no question that the "persona" of the superintendent and how he/she relates to others is an important perceptual element or model in any school district. Thus the superintendent should highlight and epitomize respect for colleagues and for students. This approach can be reflected in writings, in everyday contacts with teacher and administrators, and in public expressions of pride and support for the schools. In summary, the superintendent must both articulate and exemplify the importance of treating collegues with respect and of viewing students as worthy of the same treatment.

Support

Support can be defined in two ways. First, physical factors such as building quality and materials adequacy can be viewed as significant elements in assessing commitment. Second, the level and quality of administrative actions at both the school and district levels are important considerations which can reflect an unenlightened bureaucratic orientation or, conversely, a positive and informed approach to leadership.

Consistency in administrative behavior is an essential element in fostering commitment of students and teachers. Principals who are effective apply rules, regulations, and procedures uniformly to both students and teachers. Their actions and their words are "all of a piece" and their administrative rationale is clear to students and teachers. At the district level, the formulas used for the distribution of resources to the schools must reflect both equity and need and must be understood by school staffs and administrators. Specific recommendations which reflect this major factor follow.

Involve Staff in Selection of Textbooks, Supplies, and Equipment

The principal can help to engender commitment by giving key teaching staff major responsibility in the selection of textbooks, supplies, and equipment. These are tasks that the principal is less well prepared to discharge than the faculty who are day to day "consumers." For textbook selection, interested and knowledgeable staff representing their departments can, under the overall direction of an administrator, make the decisions. Department staff can also be responsible for ordering supplies. The procedures governing the purchase of equipment should be flexible and dependent upon the cost and utility of the item in relation to available resources. All major equipment purchases should be "approved" by the principal, but faculty should be involved on a consultative basis.

Foster Linkages Among Faculty and Students

To foster and encourage commitment to "place," the principal should make a deliberate effort to develop a sense of ownership and participation among teachers and students. Such a collaborative, brought together around building issues (e.g., graffiti, bulletin boards, lunchroom cleanliness), can be a powerful positive force in a school. A formal group can be organized to meet several times each school year on building issues. If a student building committee is functioning, they would represent their peers at these meetings.

Provide Opportunities for Staff Development Activities

The district office staff can play an important supportive role by providing leadership and assistance to staff development activities. One such effort should involve sharing effective programs and exemplary practices among the high schools. If there are effective programs within the district, they should be shared; if not, exemplary programs and practices and experts outside the district should be brought in. Another significant staff development activity could involve establishing a teachers' center. The Schenley Teachers' Center in Pittsburgh (described in Chapter Four), which has teachers teaching teachers, might be used as an adaptive model.

Review Staff Assignment Procedures and Transfer Policies

The superintendent should initiate a review of the district's staff assignment procedures and transfer policies to determine the involvement of principals and teachers in the process.

Principals generally accept the premise that they are accountable for the quality of education in their schools. Certainly the effective principals would have it no other way. The principals in this study, with only one exception, indicated that they would be able to meet the demands of such accountabilities better if they were provided a more direct role in the selection of faculty. As a group, they are aware of the realistic parameters of staff selection. Not every new teacher is a budding educational superstar, nor does every transferee desire to change schools in order to improve his/her teaching skills.

The superintendent should explore options in assigning staff that would provide for more involvement of principals in the process. Perhaps a percentage of newly assigned teachers each year could represent the principal's choice. The number of transfers in and out could be limited and subject to approval by the principal. Principals might enter into agreements with local colleges and universities to hire promising student teachers at the end of their senior year. Each principal might have "veto" power over one or two possible assignments each year.

The involvement of teachers in the analysis of the district transfer policy should also be explored. For example, the school district of Rochester, New York, has recently established a task force to examine and revise transfer rules and regulations. This task force consists of teachers (selected through the union) and district and school administrators. Options that might well be reviewed by the group include the feasibility of voluntary transfers, 1-2 year special temporary assignments in another school, and the use of transfers as a response to teacher burnout.

Investigate the Feasibility of Early Retirement Inducements

The superintendent should initiate a feasibility study of a voluntary early retirement project. Such issues as resource implications, union posture, impact on existing staff, replacements, political fallout, Board of Education support, and media reaction would have to be explored. Such an initiative could produce a viable and cost-effective avenue for administrators and teachers who are no longer committed to teaching or to students.

Expectations

An important finding of this study is that both student and teacher commitment are strongly associated with instructional press. Teachers respond to administrative efforts that they perceive will help them to teach better and students respond to expectations that they can learn and achieve. The extent of this desire to do better is strongly related to the level of expectation of administrators for teachers and teachers for students.

With one exception the degree of instructional press was generally low in the schools studied. Therefore, principals should establish programs which highlight academic achievement and which reflect high expectations. As indicated in Chapter Four, the district can contribute to school performance by creating an external instructional press with a focus on teaching and learning. The superintendent, as the chief spokesperson and instructional leader, can lend significant personal support to any effort to increase the level of instructional press for the district.

Some specific recommendations related to fostering an increased level of instructional press follow.

Develop Programs of Student Academic Incentives

Instructional press has substantial impact on students' commitment to both place and learning. There are, however, many aspects of the school's environment that compete with its instructional goals. One way to highlight these goals is to create incentives that are geared to academic progress. Some of these incentives are in the form of standards established at higher levels and include regularly administered standardized achievement tests and the use of minimum competency tests as a graduation requirement.

Individual school principals should create additional academic incentives for students. One school used the organized sports program as an incentive "lever" by tightening eligibility requirements (beyond those of the district) for participation in inter-scholastic programs. Another created "letters" and special jackets to be worn by students who receive excellent grades. This "Academic All American" approach could be extended by having end-of-the-year banquets for high achieving students.

Establish Faculty-Student Curriculum Committee

The commitments of teachers and students interact and can be manifested in mutually reinforcing cycles of commitment or alienation. Opportunities for teachers and students to work together on curricular and instructional issues, facilitated by the principal, should yield considerable dividends in enhanced levels of commitment. One such opportunity should be provided through the creation of a faculty-student curriculum committee.

This standing advisory committee should be charged with providing the school administration with input related to the quality, adequacy, relevance, and utility of curricular materials. It should also be responsible for examining existing course offerings in terms of objectives, student perceptions, and relationship to existing mandates (e.g., graduation requirements). All "new" courses should be brought to the committee by the organizing department prior to any inclusion in the catalog of offerings.

The committee should have a faculty representative from each department and an equal number of students. The principal or another senior administrator should attend each meeting and participate as needed but not preside. Student participants might be members of the student council or some other student elective body. However constituted, the committee should have a representative "mix" of students and should include those not academically-oriented. Meetings of the faculty-student curriculum committee should be formal sessions with an agenda and minutes. A mechanism should be established for reporting on the work of the committee to staff and students alike.

Establish Linkages with Teachers' Union Concerning Curriculum and Instruction

A commitment to teaching may be the most difficult type to foster. The principal should enlist the teachers' union as a partner in this effort. In recent years, teachers' union groups have taken an increasing interest in curricular and instructional matters in addition to maintaining their ongoing involvement in school and district working conditions. This thrust has provided opportunities for unions to work constructively with school administrators and district management toward upgrading the quality of education provided for students. An example of such a mutually beneficial alliance might well be the involvement of the union in a consultative role in terms of curriculum. School union "reps" should be invited to join curriculum committees. Opportunities for union groups to share pertinent information should be encouraged. The principal, in regularly scheduled meetings with union representatives, should submit curriculum-related items for agenda consideration. The superintendent should also be apprised of any such practice or program designed to effectively utilize the union to impact in a positive manner upon the school instructional program.

Assess Effectiveness of District Curricular Specialists

The external instructional press of the district office is personified by the curriculum specialist. Such staff are the front-line people in ensuring that important district instructional initiatives are understood and implemented in the schools. As a conduit for the superintendent's priorities, as a source of staff development activities, as a prime developer of curriculum, and as a support arm to special projects in the schools, the district curricular staff can certainly influence the instructional press of teachers. Therefore, a mechanism should be developed to assess the effectiveness of district staff. Schools served should play a role in any such assessment. Staff that don't measure up should be relieved of headquarters assignments. Some thought might be given to making all central office curricular assignments for a specified length of time with renewal based upon need and performance.

Initiate District-wide Incentive Program Based upon Student Achievement

A district-wide incentive program based upon student achievement can have a significant impact upon the extent of instructional press in the schools. Such an incentive program can take a variety of forms and should reflect district priorities, needs, resources, political support, and contractual obligations. Obviously, staff awareness and receptivity would be an important consideration in any such plan. Rewards under this incentive project should be based upon growth or progress rather than upon an absolute standard. Thus, the teacher who has had an increase of 2.2 years in class reading scores but whose children are still below grade level may have "achieved" more than a colleague whose students began and remained close to the top of the scale. A number of models of successful incentive programs should be explored. However, any incentive program selected must be designed to meet the needs of the schools in this district and adaptation may be necessary. The project design should also have clear criteria and objectives, a finite timetable, specific rewards, and staff and parental support.

Clearly Communicate District Instructional Goals and Objectives

The superintendent has a most essential role to play if the move toward a positive instructional press is to be successful across the district. First and foremost, everyone (teachers, administrators, students, parents, and community) must know and understand the instructional goals and objectives for the district. These goals and objectives represent the district plan for the year. Thus, the superintendent should use every means possible to communicate this plan to the various educational constituencies. Of course, many administrators, teachers, and students may have helped to shape and formulate district objectives, but it is the superintendent who puts it all together into a comprehensible whole. Provision must also be made for gathering the program-related data that will be used to assess the extent to which the district's objectives were achieved.

Provide Funding for Incentive Programs and Curricular Reviews

Incentive programs cost money! The rewards of such projects may require some cost analysis and reallocation of existing resources. The superintendent is in the best position to make final decisions concerning proposed incentive programs. A decision to set up an incentive program will not meet with universal favor, but the potential gain is well worth the risk.

The types of curricular reviews that have been described, such as student-faculty committees, teachers' union-school linkages, and assessing the quality and effectiveness of headquarters curriculum specialists all have resource implications. Here, too, the superintendent's support is essential. The necessary budgetary reallocation will, of necessity, require convincing the Board of Education of the positive cost-benefits aspect of regular curricular reviews.

Lead a Yearly Retreat for District Teaching and Administrative Staff

Many district staff take their cues from the actions of the superintendent. What is perceived as being important to the superintendent is important to them. A yearly retreat, built around instructional themes, should be led by the superintendent to communicate directly the educational priorities of the district and to stimulate a heightened instructional press. Such a retreat can also involve outside experts to discuss current and relevant curricular innovations. The yearly retreat should provide a shared sense of the importance of being the best teacher one can be.

Influence

Teachers are concerned with those school factors that directly impact upon their individual classrooms (e.g., related curriculum, discipline, scheduling). They seek highly personalized influence but not the power to make major school and district decisions. Strong teacher influence within these parameters of relevance contributes substantially to teacher commitment. Specific recommendations which reflect this major finding follow.

Involve Faculty in Consultative Role for Appropriate School Operational Decisions

Teachers' level of commitment is shaped by their influence over what they perceive as relevant decisions. In line with this finding, the principal should meet on an informal basis with a rotating group of teachers prior to making decisions on appropriate school operational matters. Such issues as school discipline, teachers' programs, departmental organization, use and maintenance of faculty lounges, textbook selection, and staff evaluations might comprise major agenda items. Emphasis at these sessions should be on sharing information and insights in a collegial manner.

Delegate Decisions to Departments

Shared influence increases teachers' commitment to teaching and also to the place where they work. The problem faced by principals in giving teachers a sense of influence is how to involve them in school-based decision-making. Teacher representatives to committees are only a partial solution since many faculty still remain uninvolved. Principals and other administrators should involve larger numbers of faculty by delegating more decisions to the departmental level. One of the schools with the highest teacher perception of influence involves departments in developing the master schedule for the following year. As a result, teachers have greater control over what courses they teach and at what times. Decisions such as determining agendas for staff development activities should also be delegated to departments.

Include Teachers in Planning of Staff Development Days

Scheduled staff development days provide the opportunity for staff and administrators to come together around school and district priorities. These important days should be used to foster increased commitment by involving teachers in the planning process. This planning should be coordinated through the district office and agendas should reflect the district's goals and priorities. Individual school principals, after consultation with and "approval" from the various curriculum and instruction-oriented faculty committees, should submit a plan to the central office for the use of staff development days for the upcoming year. The district office, acting for the superintendent, should provide resources where needed and appropriate help (e.g., an outside speaker on thinking skills).

Another model that might be used involves joint planning by the staffs of several schools for staff development day programs. Results could include faculty with particular expertise in an area "presenting" to the staff of neighboring schools or two or more schools having their day together. Again, while the district office should serve as the catalyst for such linkages, the focus should be upon providing a forum for teachers to exert influence through sharing.

Establish District Teachers' Advisory Council

Classroom teachers should be provided a forum where they can discuss directly with the district educational leader the issues that concern them. Teachers are interested in instructional press insofar as it relates to their performance in the classroom. Tapping their knowledge, experience, and opinions should be of real benefit to the superintendent.

A teachers' advisory committee should be established to meet with the superintendent two or three times during the school year. Agendas would be determined by the committee prior to each meeting. The sessions themselves should be collegial in tone, of at least three hours duration, and focused upon the teachers' agenda. Although only a relatively few faculty would participate, the impact of such a group could be considerable in terms of perceptions of teacher influence.

Develop Networks of High Schools to Address Particular Problem Areas

Teachers' commitment can be increased if they are given opportunities to influence those aspects of the school environment which are important to them. The superintendent should establish networks of district high schools around a particular problem (e.g., school discipline, dropouts, curriculum relevance). Through this network, staff expertise that resides in many places can be shared, successful approaches replicated, and appropriate materials exchanged. In addition, current research and information on pertinent exemplary programs and practices can be communicated more readily in a receptive environment.

The superintendent could establish the importance of this network approach by becoming directly involved in the selection of the areas of focus. Perhaps for the first year, only one problem area should be addressed. Additional resources would be required from the central office so that network participants (teachers) would have time to develop, execute, and assess the effectiveness of their plan.

Conclusion

As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, these recommendations are designed to provide the superintendent and staff with a variety of approaches to fostering commitment. The recommendations reflect a response to the major findings of the study and are couched more in general than in specific terms.

Each superintendent is expected to read and react to this report in the light of the nature and intensity of perceived problems of commitment in her/his district. It is suggested, however, that the study also be viewed as a comprehensive and coordinated whole and presented as such by the superintendent to administrators and faculty. This approach would be consistent with the interrelationship of the five factors identified as important in building commitment among staff and students.

The recommendations can then be used as one basis for establishing priorities and for fashioning specific district programs or courses of action. It is hoped that the study will also lead to a collective initiative around a specific program or set of activities designed to foster commitment in the five school districts.

APPENDIX A
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Appendix A

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

For readability, the study design for this study was presented in Chapter I with minimal reference to the literature on commitment and related concepts. There has been substantial study of some of those concepts, and that research is reflected in this report at a number of points. This appendix reviews some of the relevant literature relevant to the major elements in the study design looking first at commitment and its related concept alienation and then at the factors that shape commitment.

Definitions of Commitment

This study examines factors that build teacher and student commitment, but in considering commitment it is necessary to think about alienation. Although the two concepts are rarely used in the same analysis, they are roughly opposites (Dworkin, 1986). That is, commitment represents a positive attachment while alienation represents a negative attachment. Etzioni (1961) is one of the few who examines the whole spectrum. He distinguishes among alienative involvement, calculative involvement, and moral involvement or commitment. Alienative involvement designates an intensely negative, even hostile orientation, such as those of prisoners to their captors and slaves to their owners. Commitment reflects an equally intense positive involvement, such as that of a member of a religious sect or an extreme political party. In between is the area of calculative involvement where the individual has a neutral orientation but will comply with requests or orders if incentives are sufficient.

Historically, alienation has been viewed as a discrepancy or gap between what the actor attains and what could be or ought to be attainable in the social order (Seeman, 1975). Authors have disagreed as to whether that discrepancy ought to be viewed as an objective or a subjective condition (Touraine, 1973). Objective alienation occurs when the individual is denied access to the means to achieve a more positive condition as in the case of slave labor or structural unemployment. Lack of awareness of such alienation is viewed as false consciousness. Subjective alienation occurs when the individual directly experiences a sense of loss.

Most research on alienation has taken place within a social psychological framework which emphasizes the subjective perception of deprivation. Seeman (1975) identifies six specific categories of loss: (1) powerlessness, the sense of low control over relevant events; (2) meaninglessness, the sense of incomprehensibility as opposed to understanding of personal and social affairs; (3) normlessness, or attachment to socially disapproved means to achieve goals; (4) cultural estrangement, the individual's rejection of commonly held values; (5) self-estrangement, the individual's involvement in activities that are not intrinsically rewarding; and (6) social isolation, the sense of exclusion or rejection. Others have developed more parsimonious lists. Newman (1981), for instance, focuses on estrangement, detachment, fragmentation, and isolation.

While alienation emphasizes negative involvement, commitment accentuates the positive. The term has been used in enough different ways, however, that building consensus on a single definition is difficult (Mowday, Porter, & Steers, 1982). Still, the array of definitions clusters into two groups representing the objective-subjective distinction in definitions of alienation. The analog to the objective view of alienation focuses on how commitment results from "side-bets" (Becker, 1960) made in the course of a career. That is, over time external factors bind an individual to a line of work or an organization in such a manner that changing it becomes extremely difficult and requires a substantial loss. These side bets include pension benefits, skills and contacts accrued over time, and reputation in a field, among others. Moreover, a substantial body of work based on cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1962) suggests that the availability of alternatives affects how one assesses available rewards and the commitments one makes. The subjective strand views commitment as resulting from the positive satisfactions that accrue from a job and suggests that as those satisfactions decline, individual commitment withers until the person changes work (Mowday et al., 1982). Buchanan, for instance, (1974: 533) views commitment as "a partisan, affective attachment to the goals and values of an organization, to one's role in relation to goals and values, and to the organization for its own sake, apart from its purely instrumental worth."

This study focuses on commitment and follows the subjectively oriented tradition which views the concept as a positive psychological bond or identification of the individual with a larger system which then takes on special meaning or importance for that individual (Firestone, forthcoming). Alienation, then, is viewed as a negative bond or identification. Where positive bonds exist, the committed person is expected to believe strongly in the system's goals and values, comply with orders and expectations voluntarily, be willing to exert considerable effort beyond minimal expectations for the good of the system, and strongly desire to remain part of that system (Kanter, 1968).

This use of the term commitment breaks with conventional usage in an important way. Commitment, alienation, and related terms such as satisfaction and stress are typically viewed as individual attitudes or orientations. Yet, there is another literature suggesting that particularly effective organizations, including schools, have a special ethos or culture (Peters & Waterman, 1982; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimer, Ouston, & Smith, 1979). Part of this ethos includes unusually high levels of commitment by the organization's members, which in school includes teachers and students. Thus, commitment also has a collective aspect, and one can speak of it as a dimension of organizational culture.

This cultural perspective on commitment has two implications for policy makers. First, it suggests that one can identify actions that build commitment throughout the school. This is not totally at odds with the individual perspective on commitment, which identifies organizational factors that affect individual commitments. It is also a useful supplement to another stream of applied research which identified characteristics of special programs that build the commitments of especially alienated students (e.g., Whelage, Stone, Lesko, Nauman, & Page, 1982). Second, it also suggests that as a dimension of culture, commitment is part of the natural system of the school. Since administrative influence over school culture is often limited, this perspective cautions policy makers to maintain reasonable expectations about what can be accomplished (Rossman, Corbett, & Firestone, forthcoming).

Whether one looks at commitment as an individual attribute or a dimension of school culture, the question remains "Commitment to what?" There is an extensive business literature on commitment to one's organization (e.g., Mowday et al., 1982) and an educational literature on commitment to teaching (e.g. Bredson, Fruth, & Kasten, 1983) because the issue that has concerned most executives and educational policy makers has been to reduce turnover and keep individuals on the job. Today, however, a large number of older teachers are trapped in their work by sidebets that are difficult to change; they must continue teaching even though many would desperately prefer another line of work (Dworkin, 1986). This raises the problem of burnout (Farber, 1984; Maslach 1976) with the associated need to improve performance (as well as the psychological health) of teachers stuck in the system. Similarly, many students keep coming to school even though they do not perform well. Thus, while many urban schools must be concerned about the attrition issue, maintaining and enhancing performance is equally significant.

For that reason, it is often important to understand the specific commitments the individual makes. Individuals are not only committed to careers and employers, but also to spouses, children, and hobbies. In addition, they become committed to specific ways of doing things and work objectives (Salancik, 1977). These specific commitments become quite important; one person's innovation becomes another's blasphemy. Moreover, these commitments become part of a school culture. Some schools are notable, for instance, because teachers share an attachment to particular definitions of what should be taught, of how important teaching is, or of what students are like and what they need (Rossman, et al., forthcoming). According to Brookover and his colleagues (1979) commitment to a belief that all students can learn minimum basic skills contributes to school effectiveness while commitment to a pupil control ideology that makes discipline, rather than instruction, the most highly prized goal can create an unpleasantly repressive atmosphere for all . In sum, it is not enough to track the level of commitment; it is also necessary to know the objects of those commitments are.

Sources of Commitment

Social forces such as labor market restrictions and institutionalized racism contribute to student and teacher alienation in significant ways (Dworkin, 1986; Fine, 1986). However, these forces are largely outside the control of school leaders. Since the purpose of this work is to identify factors affecting commitment that are within the control of administrators, this study focuses on factors inside the school or district that can be changed through policy or leadership. In clarifying those factors, it is necessary to look at how the commitments of teachers and students interact and then at the school factors that affect the commitments of both.

Interaction of Teacher and Student Commitment

Teachers and students can be viewed as two subcultures that are mutually dependent yet in some degree of conflict. The idea that the commitment level of one subculture affects the other is particularly enhanced since the two groups spend so much time in close proximity. The literature on the influence which high academic expectations have on student achievement assumes that adult orientations have a substantial influence on the orientations and actions of students (Brookover et al., 1979; Edmonds, 1979). Dropouts perceive schools as a place where teachers do not care about them (Wehlage & Rutter, 1986). Dropouts perform better in smaller situations where the staff communicates its commitment to helping them (Wehlage et al., 1982).

The idea that teacher commitment reflects that of students is perhaps less obvious. Yet, it has been clear for some time that teacher burnout and turnover take place in urban areas where students are less compliant and less committed to the goals of the school (Bruno & Doscher, 1981; Farber, 1984). Student ability is one of the most powerful factors determining teachers' sense of efficacy (Hannaway, 1986). These findings make sense if one considers that teachers spend more time with students than any adults in school (Lortie, 1975). Moreover, their rewards typically come from intrinsic incentives, more especially the knowledge that students learn what is taught them (Bredson, Fruth, & Kasten, 1983). When these rewards decline because students lack the commitment (as well as prerequisite skills) to respond appropriately in class, teacher commitment is bound to suffer. In fact, teachers frequently complain about teaching apathetic, passive students (Newman, 1981). Metz (1986) describes in vivid detail how teachers who have not received reinforcement from difficult-to-teach students develop elaborate rationalizations that what they are doing is right and the fault lies with either students or adminstrators. This "blaming" orientation both results from the actions of students and contributes to those actions.

School Factors and Commitment

Five groups of organizational characteristics are likely to influence the commitments of both students and teachers: relevance, respect, support, expectations, and influence.

Relevance. Relevance, or meaning, represents the opposite of meaninglessness as described in the literature on alienation (Seeman, 1975). It occurs when one's work has some intrinisic meaning and worth. It is difficult to achieve relevance in an ambiguous situation, and by their very nature American comprehensive high schools are expected to provide something for everyone (Newman, 1981). This condition leads to a moral neutrality in which everything is available and responsibility for choosing a program is shifted to the students. Powell, Farrar, & Cohen (1985) refer to this as the "shopping mall high school."

The comprehensive high school is especially meaningless for the urban student because abstract classroom activities do not relate to the difficult, even threatening situations that many of them face daily (Fine, 1986). Yet, there are programs that appear to be relevant to some urban students. Reviews of programs for dropouts and at-risk youth indicate that many of them find out-of-classroom activities especially attractive. These include vocational training, work-study, and experential learning programs (Hamilton, 1986; Wehlage et al., 1982). Students apparently see the connection between these activities and their after school lives in ways they cannot with regular courses.

For teachers, relevance and sense of purpose is reduced by role ambiguity and role conflict. Ambiguity or doubt about what is appropriate often occurs when administrators do not clarify goals. Role conflict occurs when goals are not prioritized or several groups make contradictory demands. Such conflicts and ambiguity contribute to teacher alienation (Organ & Greene, 1981; Schwab & Iwanicki, 1982).

Respect and Isolation. There is considerable evidence that isolation from other individuals leads to alienation. In schools, isolation often goes beyond a passive disconnection to an active exclusion (Newman, 1981). Dropouts, for instance, often believe their teachers are not interested in them (Wehlage & Rutter, 1986). Programs for at-risk youth that emphasize small size and more personal connections between students and staff are often more effective in engaging their clients in learning activities (Wehlage et al., 1982).

Typically, teachers are isolated from both their colleagues and administrators. The one teacher-one classroom organization of schools isolates teachers from their colleagues (Warren, 1975). Yet, teachers, like other workers, are more committed when norms and working conditions promote interpersonal attachments (Buchanan, 1974, Steers, 1977; Zielinski & Hoy, 1983). Moreover, teachers learn from each other so their teaching skills develop more with frequent opportunities for interaction (Little, 1982; Rosenholtz, 1985).

Teachers' relationship with the administration are more ambiguous. They want to maintain enough distance to preserve their independence. Yet, the principal is often the only adult in regular contact with them who can appreciate their performance, so in some ways they would like to have more contact (Firestone, 1980; McPherson, 1979). Overall, the evidence suggests that isolation from administrators increases teacher alienation (Zielinski & Hoy, 1983).

If isolation leads to alienation, its opposite should promote commitment, but what is the opposite in this case? Quantitatively, interaction overcomes alienation and breeds commitment as the teaching literature points out (e.g., Rosenholtz, 1985). However, the quality of relationships is not as clear. In a formal organization, friendship or kinship bonds are not necessarily appropriate. Observations in the field for this study suggest that the key quality is respect, which is characterized by a sense of fairness and consideration in interpersonal relations. The importance of respect is discussed in the body of this report.

Support. Administrative support for teachers has been shown to contribute to their performance and willingness to stay in the field (Dworkin, 1986; Gross & Herriott, 1965). Two kinds of support are important. The first is creating situations that help the individual do his or her work either through the establishment of systems to take care of problems or through specific, ad hoc actions. The second is to maintain a balance of rewards for service or taking care of the individual. To date, this support theme has been addressed more in studies of teaching than on students.

Teachers identify a number of barriers to their work that administrators can minimize. The foremost of these is poor discipline. Teachers expect principals to maintain control of the school's public spaces and to provide a sympathetic court of appeal when they have problems controlling students (McPherson, 1979). In addition teachers expect administrators to minimize paperwork, to back them in disputes with parents, and to minimize interruptions to their classroom routine (Becker, 1952; Bredson et al., 1983; Rosenholtz, 1985). Consistent application of rules creates a more predictable environment so teachers know how to operate to get things done. It also helps with the discipline situation (Organ & Greene, 1981; Rutter et al., 1979). Finally, it reduces role ambiguity (Schwab & Iwanicki, 1982). All these acts help teachers achieve the intrinsic rewards that come from working with students.

Another aspect of support is knowing that members of the school will be taken care of and that they will be treated fairly. This dependability promotes commitment by showing that superiors are committed to the individual (Steers, 1977). When an administration does not treat teachers fairly and dependably, teachers will resist its directives (Firestone, 1980).

While support of teachers has been studied extensively, support of students has rarely been conceived in the same way. Yet, many of the same factors are likely to work in the same way for students. If barriers to learning are removed, students will be more likely to succeed and be less alienated. Moreover, discipline and some of the other barriers may be as important to students as to teachers. Forty-two percent of the thefts and 14 percent of the crimes of violence that happen to children between the ages of 16 and 19 happen in school (Whitaker, 1986). Equally important, a substantial group of students in urban high schools believe that they are routinely treated unfairly by teachers and administrators (Wehlage & Rutter, 1986). Where students experience such unfair treatment, they become alienated and withdrawn (Natriello, 1982).

Expectations. When individuals become committed to a performance objective, they will strive to attain it (Salancik, 1977). They will accomplish less when no objective is set or when the objective is low than when it is set high. However, persistent failure to reach a goal will reduce commitment. The implication of the view that commitment improves performance is that support ought to be accompanied by a certain amount of stress in the form of high expectations.

The finding that high expectations--namely the belief that all students can attain basic literacy skills--contribute to the success of effective elementary schools fits well with this view (Brookover et al., 1979; Edmonds, 1979). The implications are similar for both students and teachers. First, where a teacher has high expectations for students, the students will be committed to accomplishing more and will, in fact, do so. Second, when a principal holds high expectations for teachers, they will do the same (Wellisch et al., 1978).

The situation is more complicated at the secondary level where students are expected to move beyond basic literacy skills. Sometimes teachers who are subject matter specialists may hold inappropriately high expectations for students, e.g., they may expect students who lack prerequisite skills to succeed in a conventional high school curriculum or may reject the idea of working with such students as "not real high school teaching" (Rossman et al., forthcoming). Thus, the question of what constitutes appropriate expectations for the secondary level is not a simple one.

Influence. Influence is the opposite of the powerlessness theme described in the literature on alienation (Seeman, 1975). Individuals are most highly committed to jobs that give them a great deal of autonomy and discretion, partly because they have a sense of making a greater contribution to the organization (Buchanan, 1974; Steers, 1977). Commitment is also enhanced when teachers feel they have influence over decisions that affect their working conditions.

In education, there has been considerable debate about the kinds of influence that teachers want. They clearly value their autonomy in the classroom (Lortie, 1975). The current reforms in teaching seek to extend influence by giving to give lead teachers influence similar to that of principals, including aspects of school operations as well as a substantial say in major curriculum decisions. Yet, there is considerable evidence that teachers do not want control over major policy decisions. School improvement research suggests that teachers are often happy to let others choose the innovations adopted, but that influence over detailed planning facilitates implementation (Berman & McLaughlin, 1975). Their real concern is with autonomy in the classroom; activities that take time from teaching--including making policy--are often resented (Corbett, Dawson, & Firestone, 1984).

For students, an important part of the influence issue is choice. School attendance is required by law (up to a certain age). However, choice of program or school gives students a greater sense of control over their destiny

(Newman, 1981). In addition, one of the attractions of experential education is that students have more of a sense of autonomy or at least reduced supervision over their work (Wehlage et al., 1982).

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS FOR DISTRICT STAFF

1a. How long have you worked in the district? ____________________ years
1b. How long have you worked in this job? ____________________ years

2. What are your responsibilities related to secondary education in the district?

3. What things has your office done in the last few years that have had the biggest impact on secondary education in the district?

4a. What means does your office have for obtaining input from high school teachers on decisions affecting their work?
4b. Are there other important ways for high school teachers to influence district decisions affecting their work?

5. What are the major issues today related to secondary education in the district? (PROBE FOR RESPONSE TO ISSUES.)

6. (FOR DESIGNEE ONLY) We are going to ask teachers and student some open-ended questions that should elicit information on how the superintendent's and board's priorities affect them. What are the most important priorities that we should be looking for?

We are going to be visiting __________________ and __________________ high schools.

(ASK AS APPROPRIATE FOR RESPONDENT)

7a. What can you tell me about the students at ______________ High School?
7b. What can you tell me about the teachers at ______________ High School?
7c. What can you tell me about the programs and curriculum at ____________ High School?
7d. Generally, how is __________ High School similar to or different from other comprehensive high schools in the district?

8a. What can you tell me about the students at ______________ High School?
8b. What can you tell me about the teachers at ______________ High School?
8c. What can you tell me about the programs and curriculum at ____________ High School?
8d. Generally, how is __________ High School similar to or different from other comprehensive high schools in the district?

9. Is there anything that you would like to add about the district or participating high schools?

QUESTIONS FOR BUILDING ADMINISTRATORS AND GUIDANCE COUNSELORS

1a. How long have you worked in this building? ____________________ years
1b. How long have you worked in this district? ____________________ years

2. What are your responsibilities here?

3. What are your major priorities for the coming year? Are there some things you are really trying to accomplish? (PROBE REASONS FOR PRIORITIES)

4a. How well do the teachers here get along with administrators?
4b. How well do the teachers here get along with each other?
4c. How well do the teachers here get along with students?
4d. How well do the students get along with each other?

5a. What kinds of things do teachers make or help make decisions about?
5b. What kinds of things do they want to make decisions about?

6a. What kinds of things do students make or help make decisions about?
6b. What kinds of things do they want to make decisions about?

7. What things do you think make teachers want to continue to teach here?

8. What things do you think make teachers leave or think about leaving this school?

9. What things do you think make students want to stay in school?

10. What things do you think make students drop out of this school?

11a. How good a job does this school do in educating students?
11b. What could be done to improve the education students receive?

12. What things have been done at this school in the last few years that you are proud of and would like to have others know about?

13. Is there anything that you would like to add about the school?

QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

1. How many years have you taught in this building?

   ________________ years ________________ years ________________ years

2. What do you teach? (PROBE OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES.)

3. What extracurricular activities are you involved in?

4. What have been the big changes in this school for the last few years?

5. What are the top priorities for this school this year?

6a. How well do the teachers here get along with administrators?
6b. How well do the teachers here get along with each other?
6c. How well do the teachers here get along with students?
6d. How well do the students here get along with each other?

7a. What kinds of things do teachers make or help make decisions about?
7b. What kinds of things do teachers want to make decisions about?

8. What kinds of things make teachers want to keep teaching in this school?

9. What kinds of things make teachers think about leaving this school?

10. What things make you feel that you have had a good day in school?

11. What things make you feel that you have had a bad day in school?

12. What is the most exciting professional activity or project you have been involved in through the school or district in the last year?

13. If you could change one thing about this school, what would it be?

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

1. What grade are you in?

____________________ ____________________ ____________________

2. What activities are you in?

3. Do you work? (What at?)

4a. How well do the students here get along with administrators?
4b. How well do the students here get along with teachers?
4c. How well do the students here get along with each other?

5a. How much do the teachers here care about the students?
5b. How do you know?

6a. What kinds of things do students make or help make decisions about?
6b. What things do students want to help make decisions about?

7a. What things do you think make students quit school?
7b. What things make students want to stay in school?

8a. How good an education do you think you are getting at this school?
8b. What could be done to improve the education you are getting?

9a. How often do you feel that you have had a good day in school?
9b. What things make you feel that way?

10. What things make you feel that you had a bad day in school?

11. If you could change one thing about this school, what would it be?

APPENDIX C
VARIABLE DEFINITIONS

CHART 1
TEACHER COMMITMENT VARIABLES

Variable	Definition	Example
Commitment to Students	Strong positive attachment to students and the idea of helping them.	HIGH "I love the children, and I know they need help. Just knowing that I did some little thing for a few students." "I stay because of these students. I've come across students fighting after school hours. They don't address me, but I get respect." LOW "You work harder here because of the clientele. After eighteen years, I've put my time in."
Commitment to Teaching	Strong positive attachment to the content, draft, and outcomes of instruction.	HIGH "The degree of professionalism here is exceptional. At the school I worked at before, the main topic of discussion was retirement. Here people talk about educational issues; what works. It's intellectually stimulating." "[A good day] is when the students learn. There's a good discussion, a challenging discussion. When you test and everyone does well."
Commitment to Place	Strong positive attachment to the specific school.	HIGH "I was a temp here for my first two years. I was offered a permanent slot at [another school], but I stayed here as a temp instead . . . I'm ready to try something different, but I want to do it here. I'd like to get into counseling." LOW: MODERATE "Going someplace else doesn't make the grass greener. There are problems everywhere."

CHART 2
STUDENT COMMITMENT VARIABLES

Variable	Definition	Example
Commitment to Learning	A strong belief in the importance of doing well in courses.	HIGH "I have a good day when I answer a hard question in class." "In [a special program], you can work independently and help plan your courses. You can suggest projects and topics to work." LOW "I tolerate teachers. I use passive resistance and sleep through class." "A good day is when there's no homework."
Commitment to Place	A strong positive attachment to the specific school.	HIGH "Students tell each other about the (name of school) Way." "A good day is when I'm with my friends." LOW "Students don't even come to the basketball games during the regular season when we're winning."

CHART 3
INTERVENING VARIABLES

Variable	Definition	Example
Blaming the Students	Displacement of responsibility for one's own actions to students. Complaints about student background and behavior that is disproportionate to the situation.	"Because of the open enrollment policy, the better students in the area don't come here. Yet, this school is expected to be like the others. [Schools X and Y] get the better black students. We have to work harder to get the scores up. We get more aggravation and less results." "They don't care. More black student drop out. They have no family, no foundation. They can go out on the corner and pop a pill. . . The white students act the same way. They have no incentives. I called one Mother about her child not coming to school. She said, 'He doesn't like school.'"
Blaming the System	Displacement of responsibility for one's own actions to the administration.	"They load us down with paper work and don't handle students the way they need to 'cause they're in a never-never land . . . Students who cause repeated problems in class are still around . . . The problem is stupid policies from [the district office] and the federal courts. I'd like to see a judge teach a class where you can't throw a kid out 'cause of his constitutional rights.'" "I don't dwell on discipline as much as I need to. The administration doesn't support us on discipline. They say do it, but they tie your hands . . . The tone has to be set at the top. People are socializing when they should be working. I mean administrators."
Student Actions		
		HIGH
Student Behavior	Extent to which norms of good behavior (dress, decorum, neatness, politeness, order) are internalized and acted upon.	Politeness in halls. Noise level is reasonable. Students get to class on time.

CHART 4
RELEVANCE VARIABLES AFFECTING STUDENT COMMITMENT

Variable	Definition	Example
Programming for Relevance	The presence and extent of job relevant programs and career oriented counseling.	HIGH A counselor showed the large number of students she had placed in different branches of the armed services. A school has an electrical academy, a business magnet, weekly speakers on different careers, and a career fair.
Students' Sense of Relevance	Strength with which students see the connection between school work and a job.	HIGH "I'm in the dental technician program . . . It's pretty relevant. We make dentures and partials. We don't scrape. It's a two-year program, and we get a certificate at the end . . . I tell my friends to get in it. They like the pay. It's pretty decent. There's a place in _____ that will start you out at ten dollars an hour." "I want to go into construction. School helped when I took construction." "A high school diploma keeps students in school so they can bet a good job, like being a tractor trailer driver."

CHART 5
RESPECT VARIABLES AFFECTING STUDENT COMMITMENT*

Variable	Definition	Example
Administrative Support for Students	An understanding of and willingness to help students attain their interests as exhibited by administrators.	HIGH "Students respect principals who force people to do what's right and who care about students' future." "Mr. Y is the best . . . He listens to you, he'll talk to you, and he lets you explain." LOW "Mr. X doesn't go into the classroom. He doesn't listen to both sides of the story."
Students' Sense of Adult Respect	Students' own belief that they are treated with decency and fairly.	HIGH "[A good thing about this school] is that the teachers care. At [another school] they put an example on the board once. Here they will explain to you."

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*Variables introduced during discussion of teacher commitment are not presented.

CHART 6
VARIABLES THAT INFLUENCE TEACHER COMMITMENT: PHYSICAL & SYSTEMS

Variable	Definition	Example
Physical Arrangements		
Building Quality	Extent to which building is clean, in good repair, and pleasant to be in.	HIGH Lot of effort recently put into fixing up building; looks good (& clean) inside and out; good facilities. LOW Lots of graffiti outside and some inside; cold, inadequate, or broken bathrooms.
Material Adequacy	Extent to which teachers have materials and supplies they need to function.	LOW Teachers complain each has only one complete set of texts, so students cannot take books home to do homework. "How can social studies teachers use films and slides without window shades?"
Formal Systems		
Collegiality Structures	Arrangements or mechanisms that provide opportunities for discussion among teachers.	HIGH Principal held off-campus retreat to bring staff together; department offices are being refurbished to be more useful. LOW Teachers' lounges have been taken for special ed classes. Staff committees are pro forma.
Structures for Teacher Input	Arrangements or mechanisms that provide opportunities for teacher influence on important school level decisions or those that effect their work.	HIGH Principal sets up committees to work out solutions to problems.

CHART 7
VARIABLES THAT INFLUENCE TEACHER COMMITMENT: ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

Variable	Definition	Example
Consistency	Degree to which rules, regulations, and procedures are applied uniformly and with fairness towards both students and staff.	HIGH Discipline policies are reasonably and consistently enforced. LOW "Administrative staff are unfair; they play favorites. You never know what to expect."
Administrative Support for Teachers	Administrators provide "back up" to teachers; administrators offer resource support, understanding, and appreciation; communication is good.	HIGH Easy access to principal; requests are attended to. LOW Teachers feel they receive little support from administration on matters of discipline.
Instructional Press	School leaders put emphasis on teaching and teaching well. There is a lot of talk about, demand for, and assistance in curriculum and instruction.	LOW No evidence of in-service instruction; no discussion of teaching or instructional techniques.
Bureaucratic Orientation	Emphasis is on paperwork, documentation, maintenance of rules, and meeting formal requirements.	HIGH Most attention is to public relations and "looking good." A good teacher is described (by principal) primarily as "a good manager."

CHART 8
VARIABLES THAT INFLUENCE TEACHER COMMITMENT: TEACHER BELIEFS

Variable	Definition	Example
Teacher Belief		
Sense of Acceptance by Colleagues	Teachers feel liked and supported by other teachers; a sense of camaraderie and collegiality prevails.	HIGH "We go to bat for each other here; there's noting we wouldn't do for each other."
Sense of Acceptance by Administrators	Teachers feel valued and appreciated by administrators.	HIGH "If you do a good job, the principal is not lacking in praise." LOW "They have no idea what we have to go through."
Sense of Control	Degree to which staff feel they have influence or control over decisions that affect their work.	LOW "We never know what's going on. We'd like more say on scheduling. They take students out without us knowing about it."

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